



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



34.

223.



600042784V





34.

223.



600042784V







**DOUGLAS D'ARCY.**



34.

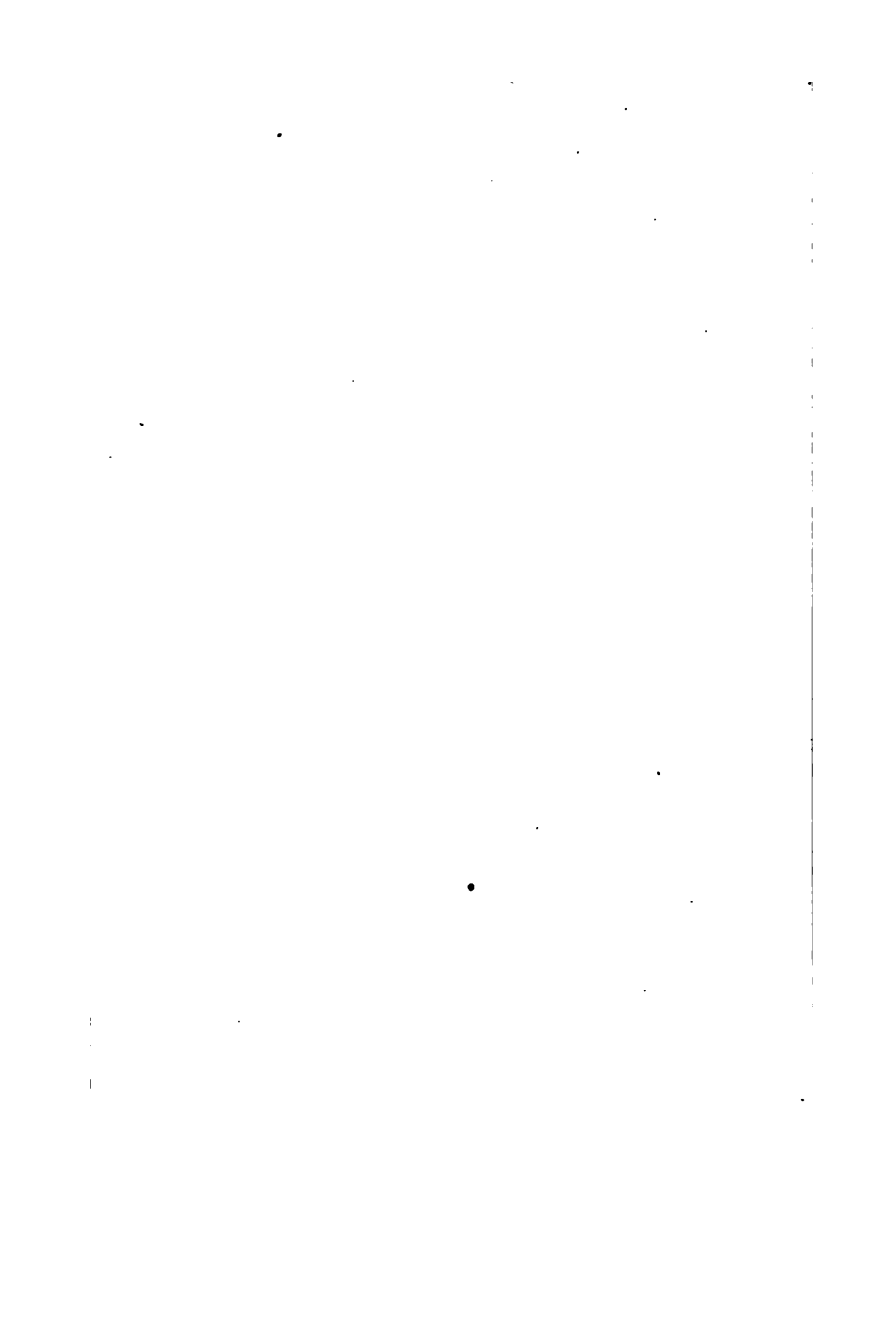
223.



600042784V







**DOUGLAS D'ARCY.**

---

**G. H. Davidson,  
New Bridge Street, Blackfriars.**

**DOUGLAS D'ARCY;**

*021*

**SOME PASSAGES IN**

**THE LIFE OF AN ADVENTURER.**

---

**LONDON:**

**F. J. MASON, 444, WEST STRAND.**

**1834.**

**223 .**



## INTRODUCTION.

---

UNFORTUNATELY for me, it is rather *passé* to find mouldering MSS. in ponderous oaken chests. Even a supernatural roll of parchment, solemnly presented by a mysterious figure, clad in dazzlingly white raiment, would barely be tolerated just at present. I am sorry for it; as sundry forgotten and egregious tomes would, otherwise, stand me in good stead.—As, thanks to the revolutionary effects of the Waverley Novels and Political Economy, I am thus prohibited from poaching on the domains of Leadenhall Street, and as, moreover, I am by no means remarkably blessed with the organ of Imaginativeness, I think that my best chance of getting successfully



through the difficult feat of an introductory chapter will spring from my telling the truth ; a piece of author-craft which will, at least, have the charm of novelty to recommend it.

The writer of the following autobiography was in my boyhood my schoolfellow ; and, after a separation of very many years, I met him some time since, by pure accident. He recognized me, but it was with great difficulty that I recognized in the pallid, careworn, and prematurely aged man, the singularly handsome and vivacious sharer of my studies and my pastimes. From the day of our accidental re-union to that of his death, I was almost constantly with him ; and it was from his papers, which he left it to my judgment to destroy or to publish (only, for obvious reasons, prohibiting their publication or even their removal until his demise), that *I* first learned the full extent of his guilt, and the sufferings of mind and body which he had endured. To me it was obvious enough that he was unhappy ; but it was only from the perusal of his memoir that I learned the cause of what might, without any exaggeration, be described

————— “ that settled, ceaseless gloom,  
The fabled Hebrew wand’rer bore ;  
Which *dared* not look beyond the tomb,  
Yet could not hope for rest before.”

As a reader, I may confess that I have a curiosity, almost amounting to a gentle monomania, to peruse all autobiographies, but especially those of bad men. There is an intensity, a firmness of purpose about them, which, our own pockets being secure or empty, compels us to feel an interest in their narrative, even while we detest the deeds they narrate.—It is from the bad that we must chiefly expect those passionate outbursts of feeling, from which the tranquillity of the good exempts them; an exemption which is the first and best of the earthly rewards of goodness.

Few who have witnessed Richard the Third performed by Kean, and Richmond by Mr. \*\*\*,—any living actor save about half a dozen may fill up the blank,—have failed to think that Richard, though a usurper, and a gentleman much prone to homicide, was a far more interesting person to *contemplate* than the “ shallow Richmond,” with his mouth full of stale

and unfelt moralities, and his heart and head filled with the soul's leprosy—avarice; yet all rejoice at Richard's defeat and Richmond's triumph. Now, this will exactly illustrate my meaning as to my taste in autobiography. I love and reverence virtue, but I contemplate with great interest *as a study*—and as, perhaps, not the least efficient incentive to virtue—the remarkable deviations from virtuous life.

It may be urged that, in such case, the lives of the entire tenantry of our but too numerous prisons ought to be published in a government penny magazine, by way of teaching morality. But whoever shall say so will assume more than I either mean or will grant. The *TALE*, whether fictitious or a genuine biography, gets, in this age of universal reading, into the hands of other persons than the mature and the experienced; and we should do small service to the rising generation did we store the brain and pollute the heart in the same volume. To be worthy of being read, the life of a bad person must be a life of *crime* rather than of *vice*; for the former shocks us from it, but the latter cannot even be looked at or thought of without injury to the delicacy of the heart, which is

to its purity what the bloom is to the peach—destroy the one, the other will soon perish. If my diligent and repeated perusal of the following sheets had not convinced me that, save as being the record of an ill-spent life—and all HISTORY abounds with such—it is free from a word which even a child in its intact and blessed purity might not read without injury, I would not give it to the world. But having ascertained that it is so, I send it forth as a fearful and not un-instructive record of a real life;—one of those terrible real lives whose agonized corporealities pass unnoticed by us in the thronged streets, and *writhe*, rather than live, their brief span among us, till the common doom of humanity terminates their earthly and dark career.

Though, both for the reader's sake and my own, I am anxious not to multiply words in the way of introduction, the more especially as the composition of sundry pages of postscript—(why are *pre-faces* always the last written morsels of all volumes, large and small?)—has already wearied me of the novel occupation of scribbling, yet I think it necessary to notice one or two points connected with the cha-

racter of Douglas D'Arcy. That unduteous children rarely make prosperous men or happy parents, I no more doubt than he did; but, in his case, it was not a *doom* born of his early undutifulness, which pursued him. It was an *effect* of the same *cause* with it. The contempt of humble industry which made him spurn the lowly fate designed for him by his father, made him first an outcast, and then successively a traitor, a murderer, and a broken-hearted, yet but half-sufficiently penitent, man. Then, again, what he says of OPPORTUNITY, though true in the main, and not without some force in the style in which it is couched, takes, after all, but a *squinting* view, so to speak, of the question which he argues. For, though it is most undoubtedly true that, *without* opportunity, no man can achieve aught, yet it is no less true, and no less easily to be proved both by argument and example, that a great many men fail utterly, and perish miserably, in *DESPITE* of *opportunity* to do better.

Moreover, every one has the opportunity to *bear*, and to submit in patience to the circumstances which he cannot control, and to the privations which he

cannot *pay society* for relieving him from. But this kind of opportunity D'Arcy took no account of. He wished to be rich and popular; and while, even in his writings, he was a complete and sneering misanthrope, he was surprised and angry that editors did not crowd to purchase his unpalatable productions, and that readers did not vie with each other in praising, honoring, and rewarding the writer, who constantly sneered at their manners, and censured their morals. He *was* a *doomed* man—*self*-doomed to misery by his own boundless vanity and indomitable self-will; and a proper perusal of his memoirs will, I think and hope, go far to teaching his readers, juvenile or mature, the utter impossibility of indulging those destructive failings, without sacrificing the peace of this life, and perilling that of the life to come.

But I find that I am fast tending towards a repetition of what I have already said in my postscript. I will therefore only add, that, as I publish this work in the belief that it will be productive of a little amusement to its readers, so I also trust that it will not be found wholly wanting in the far more im-

portant quality of power to impart instruction, and to impress warning.

“Forth, little book!—From this my solitude  
I cast thee on the waters—go thy ways!  
And if, as I believe, thy vein is good,  
The world will find thee after many days!”

W. T. H.

## DOUGLAS D'ARCY.

---

### CHAP. I.

THE game is played, and I have lost! Be it so: I have played boldly, if not wisely; and I will die as I have lived—agonized, indeed, but enduring all, and daring all, with Spartan constancy.

What a fool is man! what a slave of slaves! blown hither and thither by the very passions upon which—the solemn booby!—he presumes to moralize; and holding his feelings, his hopes, his joys—nay, even his virtues, upon the uncertain tenure of a good digestion and fine weather! And what a fool—thrice foolish, am I! Boasting, forsooth, my Spartan constancy, when the mere fact of my commencing a nar-



rative of my hateful life proves, at once, my horror of inaction, and the terrible fascination with which I am compelled to look upon the past, though I do so only to writhe in detestation of my guilt, and in dread of the punishment that is due to it! After all, I am as brave as the lauded boy of Laconia: he feared shame—a greater evil in his estimation than the fangs and tushes of the wild animal; I fear the exaggerations of my imagination still more than the loathsome facts of my memory.

Is not *all* courage a mere choice of the lesser of two evils, real or supposed? He who violates the laws of his country in the most daring manner, does he not *dare* the gallows, in consequence of his *dread* of hunger, nakedness, the desertion of his venal paramour, or some other real or imaginary evil? The soldier who deserts his post in the hour of battle is called a coward. Why? Because fear of the bayonet or the bullet acts more powerfully upon his mind than love of country, sense of duty, respect of self, or desire of glory. Ah!

it is very true; and he who dares the "imminent peril of the deadly breach," has *he* no fear? Does he not fear public opinion, and those summary enactments, the articles of war, and degradation, and cashiering? How many a coward has performed deeds of seeming heroism in his insane dread of danger, in some—to him—more formidable shape! Yes, yes! I may, I will, boast my constancy; my dreams alone would suffice to madden half the philosophers, and drive to suicide two thirds of the field marshals, of universal Christendom.

\* \* \* \*

What a fulsome flatterer is your Court Limner! How he can equivocate to the eye; painting handsome likenesses of men and women whom nature made homely, and whom debauchery and premature age have made as ugly as ourang-outangs, though they have left them as vain as peacocks.

I, the once starving—outcast, and despised, starving while honest, outcast and despised while innocent and anxious for permission to

be useful to society—I, too, have received the homage of one of these practical liars ; a silken person, with a perpetual simper on his lips, and a perpetual ice around his selfish heart. How the creature, for a few paltry guineas — not so few either ; we quacks of celebrity always charge high!—has given bloom to my cheeks, lustre to my eyes, and a glossy and wavy auburn to my hair ! The glass speaks more truly. Pale and haggard features, deep graven with the lines of past hunger and present remorse, hair white as Alpine snow, and a villanously leaden and lack-lustre eye ; that is, indeed, the faithful portraiture of Douglas D'Arcy at thirty two.

\*       \*       \*       \*

\*       \*       \*       \*

God ! how my hand shakes ; as though the physical man dreaded even to note down the dark history of the soul which is so soon to leave it to insensate and loathsome corruption.

\*       \*       \*       \*

The old remedy ! What would convert a thick-skulled fox hunter into a riotous and

disgusting brute gives me strength of nerve, and calms instead of bewildering my mind. Just now it had need be so. My medical man has just left me, with the assurance that two, or at most three weeks, will terminate my existence. No doubt he is grieved! Regularly educated, M. D. as he is, the guineas of the notorious empiric D'Arcy pass current with him, and are pouched with a most obliging alacrity. Empiric, indeed! why, he is as great an empiric as I am; he prescribes twenty medicines for the same disease, I affect to cure all diseases with one medicine. *La voila!* there is all the difference between us.

How I am procrastinating! even while the fleeting of my numbered hours is being impressed upon my hearing, and made visible to my dimmed and blood-shotten eyes, by yon gorgeous and time-noting bauble. Well, well! there are many hours in three weeks—he said, probably three!—and my tale is not long, and, thank Heaven, will not meet the eyes of

and unfelt moralities, and his heart and head filled with the soul's leprosy—avarice; yet all rejoice at Richard's defeat and Richmond's triumph. Now, this will exactly illustrate my meaning as to my taste in autobiography. I love and reverence virtue, but I contemplate with great interest *as a study*—and as, perhaps, not the least efficient incentive to virtue—the remarkable deviations from virtuous life.

It may be urged that, in such case, the lives of the entire tenantry of our but too numerous prisons ought to be published in a government penny magazine, by way of teaching morality. But whoever shall say so will assume more than I either mean or will grant. The **TALE**, whether fictitious or a genuine biography, gets, in this age of universal reading, into the hands of other persons than the mature and the experienced; and we should do small service to the rising generation did we store the brain and pollute the heart in the same volume. To be worthy of being read, the life of a bad person must be a life of *crime* rather than of *vice*; for the former shocks us from it, but the latter cannot even be looked at or thought of without injury to the delicacy of the heart, which is

to its purity what the bloom is to the peach—destroy the one, the other will soon perish. If my diligent and repeated perusal of the following sheets had not convinced me that, save as being the record of an ill-spent life—and all HISTORY abounds with such—it is free from a word which even a child in its intact and blessed purity might not read without injury, I would not give it to the world. But having ascertained that it is so, I send it forth as a fearful and not un-instructive record of a real life;—one of those terrible real lives whose agonized corporealities pass unnoticed by us in the thronged streets, and *writhe*, rather than live, their brief span among us, till the common doom of humanity terminates their earthly and dark career.

Though, both for the reader's sake and my own, I am anxious not to multiply words in the way of introduction, the more especially as the composition of sundry pages of postscript—(why are *pre-faces* always the last written morsels of all volumes, large and small?)—has already wearied me of the novel occupation of scribbling, yet I think it necessary to notice one or two points connected with the cha-

pieces, and fancy that they are showing the child.

My father was never very rich : on the day on which I completed my seventh year, he had two executions in his house, and not a shilling in his pocket, or elsewhere. In a week from that time we were homeless, and, of course, friendless ; and in another month my mother—my own, fond, doating, noble-looking mother—was “ where the wicked trouble not, and the weary are at rest.” How my father and I lived during the succeeding year, I should, at that time, have been exceedingly puzzled to depone. I know enough now of the art and mystery of matters of shift-making, to be able to make a shrewd guess.

When I was but two or three months old, our grand neighbour, the Earl of C——, was blessed with a son. His lady being blessed with a delicate constitution and a considerate doctor, bought for her child the wholesome draught which nature gave to my mother for my support. In a word, the young noble was

wet-nursed by my mother. He is now six feet two, and as strong as a drayman ; and I am a starveling wretch of five feet four. I am a murderer and a villain ; I might have been a very reputable guardsman, had my mother been rich, or the countess unfashionable. My mother was paid, to be sure ; but I am, nevertheless, not too well pleased with the arrangement. However, I derived some benefit from it ; as it caused me to become what Mr. Surr, in one of his novels, calls “an accomplished pauper ;” for, on my eighth birthday, I was, by the Earl’s interest, inducted to the charity school of ———. If any ever left that noble foundation without learning, he only did so from having, by some accident, entered it without brains. For the stubborn there is no lack of the wholesome stimulant of birch ; for the more generous nature there is an abundance of both encouragement and reward.

I have described myself as having been an untoward child ; I was, nevertheless, a studious



one. I gained the favour of every master I studied under, as far as ability and application were concerned; but for my out-of-school conduct, I verily believe that the stalwart gentleman who played provost marshal, and who played it with a will, too, flogged me till he was as tired of the operation as I was myself. I was the boy who astonished the pestiferous denizens of cockneydon, by walking on the coping outside the lower gallery of St. Paul's. I had been challenged to the feat by a schoolfellow, who, in our school phrase, *funked*. The matter was reported by some elderly lady, and I was most unmercifully flagellated for my pains.

Having completed the prescribed term of seven years, at ———, the rules of the institution required my removal, and I was removed accordingly.

Of the world I was as ignorant as a Prime Minister. My classical studies had given me no great inclination for mechanical industry,

and, to make the matter worse, I had read every novel and poem, good, bad, or indifferent, procurable within two miles of the school. This indulgence I owed to a school-fellow, whose taste was as congenial to my own as his circumstances were superior. He was the nephew and ward of an extremely patriotic and voluble civic dignitary, who, being entrusted in virtue of his office with the power to present a child to the institution, wisely considered that, as charity begins at home, it ought also to end there. The interest of his nephew's money was, consequently, added to the principal, deducting only the comparatively small, but, in reality, far too large, amount allowed to the boy by way of pocket-money.

My father was compelled to *take me out*, as it was called; but he was not very well able, and not at all willing, to provide for my future course. It was, therefore, with great joy that he heard that the institution would allow ten pounds as an apprentice fee, and that "a highly respectable tradesman"—the vagabond

absconded from his creditors and his family within three months from that time—would take me for that sum. I entreated, I raved, I prayed, and I protested. It was all in vain—I was sent *on liking*. I *liked* the whole abomination—the trade and the man, and his large, vulgar, red-faced wife, and his three criminally ugly daughters, and his two bandy-legged sons, so well, that, on the third day, I announced to that amiable set of persons my intention to remove myself and my property, consisting of two changes of linen, Virgil, Horace, Shakspeare, and Little's Poems, whithersoever it might please God, or, as I believe I was profane enough to add, the devil, to ordain.

With me performance ever followed closely upon the heels of promise—payment of tailors' bills, and the like, being of course occasionally excepted. And I had no sooner astonished the abominables by announcing my intention, than I proceeded to carry it into effect. It was in June, and the weather was warm, even for the season. I walked up to a field, between Islington and

Hornsey, to which on our holidays we had been accustomed to resort, for the purpose of bathing in the New River. What a delicious afternoon that was! I was free: "the world was all before me where to choose!" Alas, poor child that I was, I little recked of what a villainous world it was upon which I had so confidently cast myself. Night came on. Hunger, I know, is not a romantic sensation; but with romance I have nothing to do. I shall write truly or not at all; and the truth is, that with night came a most violent inclination to eat, without the desirable accompaniment of the *posse cibi*. I had recited Horace's eulogium on the Scythians and Getæ with great emphasis and relish; and, while the sun was still shining upon me, and the birds making glad music above and around me, I had exulted not a little in my almost Scythian independence of the world. But your gastric gnawings are sad disturbers of poetic dreaming; and, as the evening darkened, and the chill dews fell around, I contrived to remember that the

pleasant Roman sycophant, who sang the sweets of independence and simple living, under the yoke of the tyrant whom he flattered, and amid the luxuries for which he sacrificed his dignity, did not, in praising the northern barbarians, include an utter abstinence from food among their virtues. Moreover, they had their waggons—commodious resting-places enough, I make no doubt. I had the damp grass for my couch; the trunk of an old tree—how often I had climbed it in my wild boyhood!—for my pillow; heaven for my canopy; and, for my consolation, some very annoying doubts as to the propriety of casting away a bad home in the absence of a better.

Youth and a good conscience may rest well upon even a worse couch than “High Bank” at Islington; and I slept soundly and undisturbed until the sun’s brightness and heat awoke me on the following morning.

## CHAP. II.

EVEN at this distance of time I perfectly well remember the horror with which, on awaking in the morning, I contemplated my desolate condition. Weak, stiffened, and with a consciousness of squalor, I felt as if my doom were already decided; and it was not until half an hour's swimming had set my young blood once more in vigorous circulation, that I could shake off a benumbing feeling of helplessness and outcast misery. And even when I had done so, and had made my toilet in the true Scythian style—of which, by the bye, I was far less enamoured than I had been on the preceding day—with the green field for my chamber and the not too pellucid

stream for my mirror, I walked listlessly and sadly towards town, scarcely knowing to what course to betake me. Ignorant as I was of the actual world, I was, even then, far too shrewd and accurate an observer to be ignorant of the ruling passions of those individuals with whom I had come in contact. And though my father had been, during the entire term of my sojourn at school, too economical of his paternal attentions to afford me many opportunities of studying his character, I had read quite through the thin and flimsy disguise of his mild tones and very superior manners; and had discovered him to be at once weak in head and cold in heart; ready to sacrifice a world to the indulgence of his own least important or least honourable wish, but actually appalled by the prospect of the slightest exertion required for any other purpose than that of his own gratification. To talk to him about the debasing vulgarity of the people he had placed me with, would, I knew, be labour and argument thrown away; and to speak of what I was fit for, and

might *become*, would, I was equally well aware, only lead him to shrink from what it would be necessary for him to *do*. He had already deprived me of one admirable chance of rising from the herd in which his innate, and, through life, invincible, indolence, had caused my lot to be cast. For the noble institution in which I was educated annually sends some youths to sea; furnishing them with every necessary for the berths of midshipmen, which it procures for them. And my reading, while it had excited a thirst for closer acquaintance with the marvels and the glories of far lands, had, also, fanned into a flame the naturally audacious and adventure-seeking glow of my spirit; and I panted to distinguish myself in the sanguinary business of war. Upon that business, I now look with contempt and loathing, not on account of its bloodiness and tyranny merely—for I, alas! am not so free from blood guiltiness as to be tender of life or limb—or even chiefly; but on account of its ferocious, and at once slavish and savage cant.



How it glories in deeds from which the fiends of hell might turn in pity of the sufferers, disgust at the sufferings, and a more than fiendish hatred and loathing of the things that inflict death and suffering for their daily bread, and wallow in the gouts of the shambles, that tyrants may smile in scorn, and slaves shout in idiotic joy and frantic congratulation!

I proposed myself as a candidate for a vacancy in the Naval school, was accepted, and should just have been in time to gain reputation or lose life at the celebrated bombardment of Algiers; but the consummation of my wishes required my father, for a single day, to have a father's anxiety, and a man's activity. The rules of the institution required that I should enter, by my nearest friend, into a bond; as it not unfrequently had happened that youths had received the Naval outfit, including mathematical instruments, a valuable gold chronometer, and other costly articles, and then betaken themselves, not to

“The dangers of the seas,”

but to the less hazardous and more congenial employments of measuring yards of riband, and weighing pounds of tea. A day was accordingly appointed for my father to attend at the committee-room of the institution, to sign my bond; and he promised to attend. I waited in a perfect agony of hope until the clock struck two strokes more than the appointed hour; when he had not arrived, and the committee of governors *had*—departed. I have since learned that he was too busily engaged on that day, in witnessing a pugilistic display between a Herculean negro and a coal-heaver, to have time to remember that his eldest son's destiny depended upon his walking half a mile and writing two words. Be that as it may, and I have every reason to believe it to be true, I lost a fine opportunity, beyond the power of retrieval.

To hope that a person so wedded to his indolence as this affair indicated my father to be, would sympathise with my motives for abandoning the mechanical vulgarisms to which

he had doomed me, or have any mercy upon a son so oddly constituted as to suppose something more than a coarse meal and a dark garret desirable between the years of fifteen and twenty-one, would have been idle in the extreme; and, as I slowly and thoughtfully wended my way through Islington and the city, I resolved, come what might, never again to see my father until I could say—"I have struggled, and I have conquered." Fatal resolve! I *have* struggled, and I have, in a worldly point of view, conquered; but how! and at what price! Would to heaven I had been as lowly-minded as my father was desirous that I should be. Vulgarity, obscurity, wit prostituted to obscenity, the languages of Greece and Rome forgotten for the slang of trade, and the living languages left unnoticed for the slang of the streets, ignorance the most brutish—all, all that he had doomed me to, would I now cheerfully endure, to wipe out but one blood-spot from my palm. He wished both unwisely and unkindly; but a curse ever

attended, and ever will attend, the undutious child. I ought to have obeyed: and, seemingly evil as the lot was to which he ordered me, I should have been a gainer by obedience; and I was condemned to utter misery from the instant that I determined to disobey.

But I did determine, and, having done so, the important question again arose—of what I was to do to ward off instant famine, and preserve life for the struggle to which I had anticipatively and resolutely devoted myself.

I had an Uncle in London; a tradesman, in no ill circumstances, and possessed of both a clear head and a feeling heart. But he had been ill repaid for many services which he had, in former years, rendered to my father, with whom he was, at the time I write of, consequently at feud. I subsequently learned to understand that he would not have spurned the unfriended son, even had his injuries been ten times greater than they were, at the hands of the father. But I did not then do justice to his fine spirit, and I resolved to get a message

privately conveyed to my aunt, my mother's own sister. During my whole stay at school, she had supplied to me the place of my lost mother, and I was very certain that, as far as her power extended, she would both advise and assist me.

My confidence in her was not ill founded. The sale of my Virgil procured me the means of purchasing a breakfast, of which I stood in grievous need, and enabled me to write and dispatch a letter to her, which, in the course of the day, she answered in *propria personâ*. She, after the approved and established fashion of married ladies, had formed as unjust an estimate as I had of her husband's character; and, consequently, instead of at once stating the case to him and procuring me the secure shelter of his home, and the aid of his advice, founded on long and varied experience of the world, as to my future course, she assisted me from her private, and of course limited, means, without making any mention of the circumstances to my Uncle.

This course was, unquestionably, imprudent, but it, as unquestionably, resulted from an affectionate desire to be of service to me, and from an ill founded, but not unnatural, dread, that my Uncle would interfere to prevent her from doing so, should my destitute and necessitous circumstances come to his knowledge.

It will, probably, appear incredible, but it is nevertheless strictly true, that I was at this period so ignorant of the ways of the world with which I had come into collision, that though, on the first day of my application to my aunt, I received a supply of silver so liberal that, to my inexperience, it seemed absolutely inexhaustible, I slept on that night, as on the preceding one, in the field at Islington. I had no idea of lodging being purchaseable, temporarily and by a stranger; I had not then learned that in venal London no man is a stranger, excepting the honest fools who have thread-bare coats and empty pockets.

To make the night shorter, I went to the Surrey Theatre, and witnessed with great

delight—for the early hour at which we were compelled to be at home at ——— inhibited our visiting the theatres—the performance of several one and two act absurdities. With one of these, “Lolonois, or the Buccaneers of 1660,” I was especially taken; probably because it abounded, beyond all the rest, in trap-doors, rope-ladders, impossible combats, and sickly sentimentalism, mouthed by known harlots, and fustian heroics spouted by illiterate he vagabonds, unconscious of the meaning of what they uttered, and trembling lest a bailiff should leap from the pit, while they shouted defiance to all potencies, earthly or diabolical. When the theatre was at length closed, I proceeded to my field at Islington, and slept there again, soundly and undisturbed; though some rain which had fallen in the evening had rendered my couch very well calculated to produce, in after years, if not immediately,—

“cramps and

Side-stiches that do pen our breath up.”

On the following morning, after enjoying the luxury of a bath, and such changes as my portable wardrobe afforded, I returned to town, and, for the second time in my life, breakfasted at one of those neat and economical coffee-houses, which had then been but a few years known, and which have, to my certain knowledge, done more to diminish drunkenness, and to diffuse intelligence, among the more corrigible of the working orders of men, in the metropolis, than any royally patronized society, or nobly edited literary pennyworths, in existence; however loudly the latter may be puffed, or however profusely the former may be subscribed to.

I make particular mention of my breakfasting at this place, because my meeting there, for the first time, with a now well-known Magazine, had, as will hereafter be seen, a very material influence upon a great portion of the remainder of my life. Having no appointment to keep with my aunt until the evening, I spent much of the day in wandering from



street to street, poring, as long as the man, woman, or boy, would let me, over the contents of every book-stall I came to. Just as I had been driven from one of these, by the significant hint "*that's a cheap book, Sir,*" my attention was arrested by a huge sheet full of "Situations vacant!" from Clerks to Cooks, and from Secretaries to Assistant Waiters at small chop-houses. This inviting sheet enumerated every kind and grade of employment, which the most extensive connection, or the most lively imagination, could enable one man, with only one head, to bring together upon one sheet of paper, however Brobdignagian its dimensions. Not a little rejoiced was I, at the varied and numerous situations which were thus offered to my choice. I read, and re-read the bill, and at length entered, to inquire the address of the Solicitor who was stated to want "a smart, intelligent, and well-educated youth;" all of which epithets I with great complacency appropriated to myself.

The dispenser of multifarious employments was seated in a small office, consisting of a portion of a barber's shop, from which it was partitioned by deal planks unconscious of the plane, destitute of paint, and having for their sole and appropriate ornaments the protruding heads of numerous tenpenny nails. In one corner of this primitive-looking den, at a desk which had many years previously seen the best of its days, sat a squalid-looking person, "unwashed, unkempt, unshorn," with a very old brown coat, very saffron-coloured linen, a head nearly destitute of hair, and an upper lip thickly and entirely covered with Lundy Foot. This influential personage did not appear to me to be by any means duly appreciated by the place-hunting public; for, as I entered his *bureau d'intelligence*, he sat there "alone in his glory," and seemingly much engrossed with a pen and ink drawing, which he had nearly completed, of a fox, with a head very like a bullock's, running after a goose, which, to the judgment of a person not gnostic

in the imitative art, would have done duty admirably well for a donkey with two panniers. Unlike the generality of lovers of the fine arts, this gentleman did not allow the art which he practised as an amateur to seduce him into neglect of the mystery by which he found employment for his teeth: for, the instant that he became conscious of my entry, he crumpled up his drawing, with an air of confusion which I thought his amiable recreation by no means called for, and, seizing a huge manuscript book, and laying it upon the desk with a knowing twist of the hand, and noise enough to give one an ear-ache for a fortnight, he turned his sallow and sodden face towards mine; and, looking keenly at me with a pair of yellowish-grey eyes, in which the languor of famine struggled with the fire of cunning and cupidity, he demanded what situation I required. While reading the bill outside, I had not dreamed that there would be anything to pay for asking a brief question, and receiving a brief answer: for, being unaware that govern-

ment is an invention for receiving taxes and hanging thieves who have no act of parliament to warrant their abstractions, I sillily supposed that this was a government office, at which all who were willing to win their daily bread by their daily labour could hear of employment, and thus be left without any excuse for want, or the crime which that too frequently engenders. But a single glance at the gaunt and hungry features before me convinced me that, though his information might benefit me—as I believed it would,—I should receive it from no more benevolent or public-spirited feeling on his part than a strong desire to renew his acquaintance with beer and onions, of which, of whatever duration his fast had been, he stank strongly enough to annoy even a person so little fastidious as myself.

The discovery that I was going to purchase the information I needed, and not to receive it from a functionary paid from the public purse, worked a marvellous change in my feelings, and a corresponding one in my demeanor ; and I re-

plied to his question, *more Scotorum*, by asking what I had to pay. My boyish and guileless features were again read with a brief but searching glance of the yellowish grey eyes. The survey, I make no doubt, satisfied the gazer as to the unadulterated *freshness* of the person upon whom he had some hope of foraging for his desired dinner; for he replied with an artful emphasis which I can only indicate by underscoring the words for italics—‘Our charges vary: for a *common* situation we charge five shillings; for a *genteel* one, *fit for a youth like you*, we charge seven shillings and sixpence.” Need I say that seven and sixpence, the entire sum of which I was master save some, till then, unconsidered coppers, was disbursed with much readiness on my part, and pounced upon in a perfect rapture on his? This preliminary and indispensable transfer of half-crown pieces being duly made, my gentleman registered my name with a most punctilious accuracy; asking me no fewer than three times whether my Christian name were John or William.

Having made his entry of my name, and assured me of the certainty that I should speedily be engaged in some respectable office, the thin iniquity gave me the address and name of the solicitor alluded to in his bill, and advised me to lose no time in waiting upon him. In the simplicity of my soul I followed his advice to the very letter, and after a hot and dusty walk of three hours, found myself before the door of Mr. Samuel Snuggs' very small and very green cottage at Blackheath. How I rubbed up my Latin and trembled from head to foot as I made the three or four steps which took me across the lawn—a brownish atomy of grass, with a gravel sweep up the centre, and some stunted shrubs at either side! How I rejoiced, amid my trepidation, that I had read, not only Blackstone, but also Coke upon Littleton, and the Conveyancer's *Vade Mecum*! Vain rejoicing! I knocked very gently with the very diminutive but very bright brass dolphin, which shone on the pea-green door, like a sunbeam on a grass-plat, and my

summons was answered by the appearance, in much haste, of a red-faced, red-armed, and remarkably adipose damsel; who employed one hand in wiping with her apron the grease which she had laid upon the door with her other, in her haste to open it. I named my business, and was left at the opened door to gaze upon the narrow passage; in which were collected three children, who looked like thoroughly spoiled brats as ever broke china or trod upon gouty toe, a cat, two kittens, and three "hall chairs,"—the backs of which last were ornamented by a huge red-headed lion, and the conspicuously flourished cipher, in pea-green colour, of S. S.

I was not long kept waiting; for, when the servant had announced through the half-opened parlour door, that there was a *boy come after the place*, the shrill voice of Mrs. Snuggs commented in no gentle tones, and in no flattering terms, upon the insolence of "*the fellow*, to give a double knock indeed!" A brief and indistinct muttering succeeded this rather ominous commentary, and I was then

desired to step into the parlour, and, accordingly, entered a small but very cozy room, in which I saw nothing censurable, excepting the pea-green colour which prevailed in carpet, hearth-rug, paper hangings, and window curtains. I have laughed often since at the recollection of the interview I was honoured with, by Mr. and Mrs. Snuggs; but at the time I felt it to be by no means a laughing matter. My heart sank within me, and I felt my friendlessness and poverty with an aggravated and scarcely endurable bitterness as *I stood* to be questioned, while the rude and plebeian-faced brats gaped in my burning cheeks, or pushed rudely past me in chace of their kittens.

“Oh!”—said Mr. Samuel Snuggs, — but before he could proceed beyond that opening exclamation, he was interrupted by his obviously better half, who desired me to remember, in future not to give a double knock when calling *at a house like that*, to ask for a place. I bowed with all necessary humility, but said nothing,



as I was, then, incapable of speaking falsely, and not of opinion that I should do myself any material service by telling the lady, as sincerity would have required me to do, that I had ere then knocked in a similar style at houses, to which hers, with the addition of its lawn, would scarcely have sufficed for a door-way. The lady having concluded her exhortation, looked at her elderly and stout spouse, with an expression in which approval of her own oratory was joined to a permission to him to proceed with his speech. "Oh!" resumed Mr. Samuel Snuggs—"so you want a place, my lad; have you ever been in service before?" I replied in the negative; and Mr. Snuggs employed the short pause which followed my answer, in taking a huge pinch of snuff, and accurately adjusting upon his very small and snubbish nose, a pair of green spectacles mounted with horn. Peering suspiciously and sharply at me, he then proceeded with his examination. "Never been to service yet! How have you lived then?" I explained to my

questioner that I had been from my eighth year at the well-known and excellent charity school of — —; but my explanation made anything rather than the favourable impression I had anticipated.

“Oh! ah! bad place that; a youngster who was brought up there was hanged for forgery twenty years ago.”

I must confess, that I was somewhat puzzled how to reply to so odd an objection to a school which constantly contains about eight hundred boys. But, as I had a point to gain, I was determined to leave no means untried. I therefore named an alderman, three naval and two military officers, three of the finest of our living writers, and the editor of the principal metropolitan journal of the day, as *elevés* of the school. I might have spared myself the trouble, for Mr. Snuggs shrugged his shoulders with an ineffable expression of pity, and replied, “Oh! ah! the alderman, to be sure, was a clever man; died worth a plum, and was none the worse, that I know of, for having

a wooden leg. But the others! Naval and military officers! Pretty creatures in times of peace, crawling about town with two-and-two pence a day, and threadbare blue frock-coats, buttoned up to their throats to save waistcoats! And the writers! Poets and critics! One of them too sublime to look down from the sky to avoid a well, if one lay in his way; the others laughed at once a month by the best work in England; and all the rest of the month by all its readers." I was not then well enough acquainted with the personalities of literature, to be able to make a suitably bitter reply to this worldly and time-serving speech; but I felt that it was unjust, and I believe my looks indicated the tone of my feelings. For the worthy person turned suddenly and sharply from his dissertation *De omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, and demanded what I could do. I stated my capabilities as modestly and briefly as considerable natural vanity, and a vehement desire of employment, would allow me. But I had brought my law

and my Latin to a wrong market, for when I had concluded my statement, my rotund auditors burst into a simultaneous guffaw, and asked in one breath, and with wonder impressed upon both their queer physiognomies, what place I had expected. I replied, with all simplicity, that of Clerk to a Solicitor “My name,” quoth the short, round, and bitter gentleman, is Samuel Snuggs: I kept an oil-shop in Deptford for thirty years, and I advertised in the ‘Publican’s paper’ for a boy to look after a horse and gig, feed the pigs, milk a cow, clean shoes and knives, and make himself generally useful. Your hands are too white for work, and your looks promise no superfluous honesty. But old birds are not caught with chaff, and whether your cock-and-a-bull story about an office-keeper and three half crowns is true or not, I would not have you in my service if every curl on your head was a golden guinea. So trudge, sir, trudge !”

And I *did* trudge; and however trifling the

matter may appear to those who shall, haply, read these veritable memoirs, when the sleek, damp, gloating worm shall be battenning on the putrid and sweltering body of the writer, I can conscientiously affirm that no one event, in a life fruitful of vexation and bitterness, has caused me such sharp and lasting agony as did my repulse by a retired oilman, and his oily and evil-looking spouse. From Blackheath to Greenwich, and from the latter place to Deptford, I walked unconscious of the presence of a single human being; though I must have passed many hundreds. I could think only of the sharp censure which the worthy Mr. Snuggs had passed upon my countenance; and never did Pagan philosopher in search of wisdom, or Christian philosopher desirous of that self-correction without which all wisdom is foolishness, search with more impartial and unsparing keenness into the depths of his own heart, than I did, during that walk, into mine, in the sincere desire to discover whether my propen-

sities — my actions I knew had not—*had*  
stamped features which had always been  
spoken of as eminently handsome with the  
lines of fraud and cunning

## CHAP. III.

I CANNOT say that the result of my peripatetic self-scrutiny was either pleasant or flattering ; for it was a conviction that, beneath many superficial good qualities, my character had one damning and unconquerable vice—Vanity.

This, I am well aware, is commonly looked upon, by shallow observers, rather as a weakness than a vice ; but where it is excessive, and refers to qualities rather than to appearances, there is scarcely any crime to which it may not be the precursor and the incentive. My vanity recked nothing of personal beauty, elegance of manners, or fashion of dress, though upon the two former I had been abundantly flattered by persons whose praise

was not easily won. It was of mental and moral excellence that I had always desired the praise of my fellows. The frequent flagellations which, in a former chapter, I have confessed to have received while at school were chiefly incurred through my vanity. To cause me to peril life and limb in some seemingly impossible gymnastic performance, and to break the bounds of the school for the purpose of doing so, it was only necessary for a schoolfellow to praise my courage and agility. To give instances of this would require a detail of too juvenile a nature, but the fact requires mention, as my excess of vanity was undoubtedly—though it has long ceased to be so—the chief and ruling element of my character. In boyhood I had once great difficulty in refraining from stealing a gold watch from a respectable family at whose house I visited, with no other object than to give it to a boy who had spoken in praise of my generosity: and in early manhood I married a woman whom I could not love, and



whom I did not even esteem, simply because she spoke in ignorant laudation of some bitter bad papers which I had contributed to one of the periodicals.

My discovery of the dominant vanity of my nature, proving as it did that upon one point, at least, my honesty was not more invulnerable than the fat physiognomist of Blackheath had judged it, I verily believe worked some instant and permanent evil upon my mind and heart. To be morally and mentally *perfect* I could have borne and dared anything; but being *consciously imperfect*, I cared not—and the feeling of recklessness grew up in an instant to the rooted and ineradicable strength of a life—long habit—*how* imperfect I might become. It was in this afternoon's walk to town that I began to give way to that misanthropy which has mainly worked upon my heart in making it deaf to the calls alike of humanity and religion; for I no sooner discovered that I might become hateful to my fellow worms than I began to hate them by anticipation, and to

seek a fallacious, but temporarily efficient, justification of my hate, in searching after the ridiculous and the hateful, to the exclusion of the great and the amiable.

I arrived in town late in the evening, but in time to see my aunt at the place previously agreed upon ; and, after relating my day's adventure to her and receiving a new and liberal supply of cash, I parted from her with the intention of again seeking the theatre, and subsequently the field. But I had gone only a few paces when she overtook me, and inquired where I lodged. The question led to an explanation to which she listened with no great patience ; and of a few words which she spoke in an under-tone one sounded exceedingly like "idiot." However, the explanation was fortunate for me, for it caused me, under her advice, to secure a lodging that night, and thus to avoid the "pitiless pelting" of one of the most terrible tempests, accompanied by very destructive lightning, by which the

metropolis has been visited within my remembrance.

On the following morning I paid an early visit to my veracious friend of the register office. He was, of course, perfectly certain that I should upbraid him with his unprincipled misconduct; and he had apparently prepared himself to bully me by way of making amends for having previously plundered me. For I had scarcely commenced speaking to him when he exclaimed, "Oh! I thought you would never suit that place; no respectable solicitor would take in such a shabby fellow as you!" This was a little too glaring an insult; especially while I yet remembered to have paid an extra two and sixpence on the score of being a genteel youth. And, therefore, I compelled the lean swindler to hear that his solicitor was a retired oilman, that he wanted a menial servant and not a clerk, and, finally, that I should forthwith introduce him to the Lord Mayor, on a charge of obtaining money

under false pretences. My cool and elderly way of speaking somewhat took the gentleman aback, and before I quitted his "office" I had an ample apology for his insolence, and a promise of the return of my money ; a promise which had the fate of promises in general—that, namely, of remaining unperformed.

For some weeks from this time my life was too uniform to need any particular description ; excepting as relates to the effect upon my mind of the daily perusal of all the principal newspapers and periodicals. It is to be remembered that my life, while at school, had been very different from that of school-boys in general. They, for the most part, know as much of what is going on in the actual world as their parents and friends do, and almost insensibly imbibe the political and moral opinions which they hear supported by, and find cherished among, them. But the school at which I had passed so considerable a portion of my life was nearly as much shut out from the actual every-day world as it had been ere

the truculent Henry wrested it from the fraternity of Grey Friars, and his pious son Edward converted it into an institution in which thousands and tens of thousands of youths were in after times to profit by, and bless, his noble beneficence. When, therefore, I suddenly launched forth into the world, I came to the task of observing its affairs and judging of its real or pretended opinions with a completely unprejudiced mind; and a very few weeks of reading made me a warm, but not, I fear, very judicious, opponent of the powers that then were. It must not, however, be inferred from this that I had at that time any intention of entering, as I subsequently did, upon the turbid and impure sea of party politics. Contrariwise, while I hated the party which was in power for its want of moderation, I despised its opponents for their obvious want of real liberality, and the populace for its attachment to the sensual and degrading pursuits which were then far more popular than they now are. But the foundation was

laid for a new misery ; the slow match of vanity was lighted, and the breath of circumstance alone was needed to blow it into a flame. The eloquent papers of a leading periodical, in the interest of the then government, I so much admired — opposed though I was to the party politics of the work—that the perusal of them became at length so indispensable a necessary of life to me that I have frequently sacrificed a meal in order to obtain that enjoyment.

Well stored as my mind was with scholastic knowledge—and leading, as I did, a solitary life, unspoken to and speaking to none,—I became, from daily commune with this and similar works, changed suddenly, and as it were by some occult power, from a vivacious and imaginative boy to a grave and thoughtful man ; dreamy, indeed, and speculative, but dreaming and speculating on no unimportant or ignoble themes. This kind of study, if study it may be called, was at length interrupted, for a time, by a circumstance more common than

agreeable : my supplies fell short. My aunt has now been dead some years ; but my affection for her is still as warm and as real as it was when I was an innocent child, and she a living and warm-hearted woman. Nevertheless, I shall speak *truly* even of her, as well as of myself, and all others to whom I may find it necessary to allude. She had by no means an equal temper : to keep me, moderately and frugally as I lived, was no light burden, supplying me as she did from her mere pocket-money ; and, less in grudging of what she gave than in grieving at the obvious impossibility of her continuing to give, she grew querulous, and we rarely met without her manifesting some coldness, and I some, always soon regretted, passion. As her means became more and more inadequate to doing as well for me as her generosity prompted her to wish, her temper became more and more irritable, and our conferences more and more disagreeable to both parties. In addition to this, I began to feel something like degradation in my position ;

and I at length determined to rid her of a heavy burden, and to free myself from a painful and not very creditable state of dependence. This determination was scarcely made before it was carried into effect; and, disposing of my books, I departed from London, with ten shillings in my purse, and a change of linen in my pocket, and took the road to Chatham. I arrived there late in the evening, and liked the appearance of the place so ill, that I retrograded to Rochester, where I slept, at a small public-house close by the remains of Rochester Castle; a ruin endeared to me less by its association with the events of veritable history, than by its connexion, under the title of Gundulph's Tower, with a romance full of diablerie and witchcraft, which I had read some years previously.

On the following morning, after bathing in the Medway, and breakfasting, I departed to take a survey of the ships of war at Chatham, as a preliminary step to volunteering on board



one of them. We were just then at peace, for once in the way, with all the world; and there was, consequently, no great lack of other than able seamen, and mere landsmen were completely at a discount. This I learned from a sailor of whom I made some inquiries, with the addition that my frock-coat and boots were not by any means calculated to recommend me to a nautical eye. Feeling that this remark was correct, and being determined, the cheapness in which landsmen were held notwithstanding, to offer my services, I sought a Jew slopseller's shop, and speedily exchanged my superfine and well-built surtout for a jacket of the coarsest material, and my boots for a pair of pumps. This accomplished, I took a boat, and boarded a fine frigate, which was under orders to sail in a few days, and whose captain and officers bore an excellent character along shore.

When I got on board, the captain and some of his officers were at dinner; and I had ample leisure to view the mighty fabric, and to learn

such particulars from the seamen as might be of use to me in my expected interview with their officers. To this interview I was at length summoned, and found myself in a handsome cabin. On the table, which occupied the centre, were decanters, glasses, cigars, and all the means and appliances of convivial enjoyment; and seated at the head and sides of it were the Honourable Captain ——, and some half-dozen of his officers and visitors.

My errand had been explained by a note which I had sent aft, on my first getting on board; and the captain commenced with—

“ So, my lad, you want a berth?”

“ I do, sir,” was my reply.

“ Been to sea before?”

“ Never, sir, since I was a mere child; but I have always had a wish to do so; and if you do me the honour to ship me, I trust to make amends by zeal and industry for my want of experience.”

During the brief time occupied by this dialogue, the captain had kept his eyes kindly but

searchingly fixed on mine ; and he now desired me to retire for a few minutes. All's well, thought I : the pettiness of petty life will not be mine ; I shall be shipped, and rise by my own daring and my own zeal ; he will merely consult his officers, and they *can* have no objection.

I had scarcely arrived at this very positive and agreeable conclusion, when I was again summoned to the cabin.

" You wrote this note ? " inquired the captain, pointing to that which I had sent him. My reply was, of course, in the affirmative.

" Humph !—Can you cipher ? "

" Yes, sir. "

" Do you understand any other language than English ? "

" French, perfectly ; Greek, Latin, and Italian, much less so. "

" Humph ! " said the captain again ; and his eyes and those of his company exchanged glances, which I could not precisely interpret, but which seemed so favourable in their ex-

pression, that my sanguine and easily-excited mind leaped at once to the not very probable conclusion, that my scholastic acquirements were in request on board a war-ship, and that I should be shipped in some, at least, demi-official character. I was soon undeceived.

"It is as I suspected," said the captain, when he at length broke silence. "A knowledge more or less perfect of four languages besides your vernacular, excellent manners, and fluent speech, assort very ill with your coarse jacket, with which the whiteness and delicacy of your hands show plainly enough that you have not long been acquainted."

How proud I used to be of my white and small hands! Now they seemed, censured as they were by both landsman and seaman—it will be remembered that Mr. Snuggs had objected to them—doomed to be my pest and my foe! I looked at them with a most melancholy and accusatory expression, as the captain paused for a moment to empty his wine-glass and light his cigar. I thought of

the stag, dying through the instrumentality of the horns he had been so proud of; and, remembering how I had scorned all the more worldly and useful pursuits, and loved those intellectual ones which now seemed so useless, I was reminded of the stag's dying words :—

“ O me infelicem ! qui nunc demum intelligo  
Ut illa me profuerint quæ despexeram,  
Et quæ laudaram quantum luctus habuerint ! ”

“ Trust me, my boy,” said the benevolent and gallant officer, “ you have done ill to abandon the comforts of your home in a fit of juvenile knight-errantry. You have no idea of the hardships of the situation you solicit: you would be buffeted about from post to pillar among a set of lads, who are destitute, indeed, of your accomplishments, but as superior to you in hardihood of frame and strength of muscle, as they are inferior to you in mind; and, before you had been a week on board, you would curse yourself for volunteering and me for accepting your services. I shall cause you to be put ashore immediately; and, though

I like your open manner and your free spirit too well to subject you to any restraint, or to interfere with whatever course you may feel inclined to adopt, I beg of you, and I advise you, to think to-night of your parents, and to turn homewards to-morrow, and relieve their sufferings."

Simple words! But if I could give the tones and looks of the noble being who addressed them to me, they would seem to those who shall read them, as they seemed to me while I listened to them, "beautiful exceedingly," and eloquent as beautiful. But, shrewd observer as the Captain was, he made a slight mistake in supposing my manner to be "open." On the contrary, I was then, for the first time in my life, guilty of dissembling. My vanity would not allow me to say, as it was clearly both my duty and my interest to do, that I was so far from being able to return to "the comforts of home," and "relieve the sufferings of parents," that I was homeless, motherless, and the son of a father who would not have lost a cannon at

billiards or a flush hand at whist, to save me from starvation or the hulks. Flattered by the interest my appearance and manners had excited, I could not, important as was the crisis, disown the aristocratic status in society which was, so undeservedly, assigned to me ; and I think I could have died at the feet of my fine-spirited adviser, rather than have changed the interest which he felt for the supposed runaway of gentle birth into the coarse pity due to a friendless and outcast boy, without a place in society, and destitute of any means by which to win one. And there I stood, so enslaved by vanity that I could not dispel the illusion even from my own mind, and replying to the benevolent exhortation of the Captain only with a downcast countenance and blushes which seemed to burn my cheeks.

My demeanour confirmed the opinion which was formed of me, and, handing me a glass of wine and heartily shaking me by the hand, the Captain bade me farewell, and gave me into the care of, apparently, a warrant officer, whom

he desired to see me safely on shore. I was soon in the boat, the oars groaned in the rowlocks, and their blades flashed in the moonlit river ; and in a few minutes I was again ashore. But my conductor, a very fine fellow with black whiskers of sufficient voluminousness to have furnished the entire "tenth" with mustachios, had not yet quite done with me ; for, as I leaped lightly ashore and wished him "good night," he said "Avast there, youngster, I've a word or two for you ;" and he, too, sprang ashore, and led me a few paces onwards.



## CHAP. IV.

“Look you, my lad—” said this stalwart son of Neptune, when we were at length out of hearing of the boat’s crew,—“there’s plenty of good men both on sea and shore, I’ve no doubt; but the best man I’ve met with in nearly fifty years’ cruizing is Captain ——. I dare say you think him wrong in sending you ashore when you’d rather ha’ stopped aboard; but ten years hence you’ll sing another song. I’ve a little lad or two of my own alongside Deptford, and therefore I can feel for your parents: you see the Captain’s told me all about it! I tell you fairly that, if *I* had my will, I’d clap you in the bilboes and put you on short allowance till you’d *ask leave* to go home.

But orders are orders, and we must all sail by 'em; and my orders are to give you a couple of guineas, and to *advise* you to go home; and Captain —— says you can pay him when the frigate comes home again. So now, good night!" And, so saying, the hoarse-voiced but warm-hearted tar returned to his boat, and was several oars' length from the shore before I could utter a word in the way of reply. I will not attempt the hypocritical pretence of greater delicacy than I really felt; and I will, therefore, not say that I should have resisted against accepting the generous aid thus afforded, even had it been offered under circumstances more favourable to deliberation and discussion. But I think that, if I could have found utterance, I should have candidly stated my real circumstances to the seaman, and thus, probably, by his influence have got on board the frigate. But it was not to be; and when I had stood stupidly gazing upon the boat until I could no longer see her, I walked towards Rochester, looking with my rough

jacket, as Gil Blas did with his costly ring, "very blank."

Before I returned to the house at which I had slept on the preceding night, I paid another visit to the Jew slopseller, and after much haggling got my coat and boots back for half a guinea and the jacket and pumps; for which in the morning I had given seven shillings and the articles I now regained! "Between buying and selling," quoth the Israelite, when I reproached him with his exorbitancy, "there is a great deal of difference." I am sure I had every reason to believe him! I slept at Rochester, and on the following morning at an early hour set out, on foot, for London; where I arrived late in the evening. Having somewhat better than a guinea in my pocket, I resolved to journey to Reading, where a schoolfellow some years older than myself resided with his father, a very wealthy gentleman farmer. I resolved to take any employment he could obtain for or give to me: and in this resolution, after resting one day in

town, I again started on a pedestrian journey, and in two days arrived at Reading. As it was late in the evening when I reached that place, I deferred till the following morning my intended visit to my schoolfellow, and took up my lodgings at a small public-house at the outskirt of the town. But as mine host, a goodly personage and corpulent, quaffed his ale in the room in which I took my supper, I made, in the course of the evening, some inquiries as to the exact *locale* of my schoolfellow. At first Boniface could not remember even the name, and when he at length remembered that, he did it in connection with the, to me, not very pleasant facts, that the father had been bankrupt three years, and the son dead and buried six months. There is nothing which I hated so much while I hated anything but myself, as the pity of those into whose society chance threw me. I have never confessed to a tooth-ache, loss of money, distress of mind, or any other evil small or

large, without a sense of degradation doubly painful, in most cases, from being connected with very considerable contempt for my associates. In the present case I did not allow the astounding intelligence to move a muscle of my face, or to cause the least alteration in the tones of my voice. But in my heart of hearts I writhed beneath my disappointment; for I was perfectly certain that my request would have been instantly and zealously attended to, had my poor friend survived. But mine was not the heart to sink beneath any disappointment, however severe, or to quail at the prospect of any difficulties, however great; and in ten minutes from the time at which I had seen my castle in the air destroyed I was building another still loftier, founded upon the rather fallacious basis of the veracity of a recruiting serjeant, a very Serjeant Kite, and as convivial a person as ever degluted ale or mispronounced Moore's Melodies.

What a test of *mind*, by the bye, is singing!

An uneducated, an ill-educated, or a coarse-minded person *may* cheat you in *speaking*, but never in singing. It is a perfect shibboleth.

As it seemed pretty clear that my journey to Reading had thus far done nothing towards amending my prospects, and as I knew by experience that it required no great length of time or extravagance of expenditure to get rid of the small change for a guinea, I resolved to try if the red-coated gentleman who seemed so assiduous in catching bumpkins would enlist me. Pursuant to this resolve, I shook off the cold reserve which usually characterized my demeanour; sang songs with the loudest; perpetrated the vilest puns I could remember or extemporize; smoked as though I had been a German student; and, by dint of these and similar doings, was, in half an hour, "the cynosure of all eyes," and the, at least tacitly, acknowledged prince of the numerous, though not very select, company. As for the serjeant, my gentleman took to me wonderfully, and passed the ale-glass to me with a celerity

and assiduity, which at length had the effect of somewhat obfuscating my brain. People may talk as they please about the profundity of this philosopher, or the perspicuity of that statesman: a recruiting serjeant is a genius superior to either of them. *Nascitur, non fit*; he is a shrewd, clever, unprincipled scamp from his very cradle. Sieges, sabres, bullets, and blood, had been liberally interspersed in his discourse with prize-money, pensions, and promotion; and these, garnished by oaths sworn *ore rotundo*, and backed by frequent fillings of ale-quarts, had already secured our modern Kite a considerable number of thick-headed and slender-legged gentlemen, ready to march any where, in the assured hope of halberts in a month, and field-marschals' batons in a year or two. But the pleasant fellow saw clearly enough that I was not precisely the kind of person to yield him "faith and full credence" in the matter of merit and promotion running side by side through the world, like the Siamese twins. And, accordingly,

when he had made his valiant recruits sufficiently drunk to insure him against any voluntary locomotion on their part, for that night at least, he coaxed some and forced others to retire to the pallets provided for them in what was called the "soldier's room," a huge out-house at the end of the stable-yard. This not very facile feat accomplished, he returned to the parlour, and, without remitting in his civilities to me, affected to address himself chiefly to his corporal; a worthy, namely, who wore a corporal's stripes while reeruiting, but when with his regiment, sank again to his more befitting rank of full private. Not a word more did he now say about "the big wars that make ambition virtue;" all laudation of

"Guns, drums, trumpets, sabres, maims, and blood,"

was now eschewed; and the vast advantages of "scholarship" were glowingly dilated upon. *He* might have been quarter-master or adjutant long ago, if he had but been a scholar! And then the ale-glass was passed to me



again ; and then my "scholarship" was praised, and my making a fortune in the army cautiously yet impressively hinted at. No patriot, ancient or modern, ever understood the art of lying better, or practised it with greater zeal or tact, than he did ; and, though I should now look right through his cheateries in an instant, I am not quite sure that he would not have cheated me into "the service" then, even had I not previously made up my mind to enter into it. But I did not show any eagerness to jump to the gallant serjeant's conclusions ; and it was near midnight when I at length received his Majesty's shilling, and stated myself to be "free, able, and willing, to serve the king ;" thereby promising to aid in the commission of as many murders as this or that ministry might deem necessary to the immaculacy of the "honour of old England !" What a conceited and shameless set of savages we are ! Having in our veins the blood, and in our language the words, of all the nations of the earth ; having had the government of

the aborigines of the island—the British *αυτοκράτορας*, if they *were* such—subverted by the yellow-haired Saxons; their rule broken down, and the chief of their institutions swallowed up by the iron and sweeping despotism of the Normans; their feudal tyrannies partly abolished by, and partly blended with, the smother but not less sanguinary enactments of commercial speculators, arising slowly, and chiefly by dint of trade cunning, from villainage to citizenship; having called in the Dutch William to replace the tyrant James, and thus shown ourselves as ignorant of freedom as we were impatient beneath despotism; we chatter about our *English* nature, as though we did not derive it from the most heterogeneous of earthly admixtures; and of our glory, as if it were not compounded of the fierceness of the bull-dog, and the stupidity of the creature that chews the thistle!

Leaving some one else to reconcile glory with bloodshed, and honour with tyranny, committed in every age and in all the quarters

of the globe; and leaving those who boast their descent from unprincipled swordsmen and menial grooms, who accompanied or followed the accomplices of William the Norman, to reflect upon the possibility of their male ancestors' poverty, and their ancestresses' amours, having made some slight mixture of Saxon blood with the "pure stream" upon which they plume themselves, I must return to the parlour of the Castle, at Reading. Assembled there, on the morning after my enlistment, were sixteen recruits, a serjeant, and a corporal, from a neighbouring village, my friend Kite and his corporal, two fifers, and a drummer. It was market-day; and I learned with no small consternation that we were to parade the streets, our *band* playing, and cockades flying in our hats. This was rather more than I had bargained for, but it was now too late to repent; and, having *looked at breakfast*—eating it was out of the question, after having drunk to excess for the first time in my life on the preceding evening—

I followed my leader, and we marched to the town-hall, our fife and drums playing, "See the conquering hero comes," "Britons strike home," and so forth. I disliked this exhibition, but I believe that I had the lightest heart in the company, the red-coated kidnappers excepted. Very unlike conquering heroes looked the half-sobered and wholly repentant bumpkins; and for striking home, poor devils! it was now somewhat too late for that. For my own part, I only had to complain of the confounded noise of our musicians, which sadly incommoded my aching and fevered brain, and of a most raging thirst. Of this latter, I had not long any reason to complain, for as soon as we had seen the Magistrate at the town-hall and been duly "attested," we adjourned to a public-house in the market-place, there to receive our bounty. The majority of my new comrades must have been tipplers of vast capacity, for I observed that the serjeant had a demand against most of them for sums individually sufficient to purchase intoxication for

an entire company of foot; a demand which made the business of paying them by no means a long or an intricate one. Some received a dozen shillings, others twenty, and one, whom they had been obliged to put to bed before I arrived on the preceding evening, had only two-and-sixpence to receive, as, in addition to his bibulous expenses, he had borrowed from the serjeant to the amount of a pound, as the serjeant averred. Eaten bread is proverbially soon forgotten, and I fear that borrowed money is sometimes in the same category; for the recruit could by no means remember either the receipt or the expenditure of the pound in question, though the serjeant reminded him of the exact coin, two crowns, two half-crowns, three shillings, and four sixpences, in which he had advanced it.

It at length came to my turn to receive the bounty of his Majesty. What sum I ought to receive, I neither knew nor cared; my object in enlisting was to have a mean of subsistence; and therefore, when the serjeant handed me

twenty-five shillings, I very readily believed all he said about some "*regular* stoppages for accoutrements," and assured him that I was perfectly satisfied. Encouraged by this, he took an opportunity to whisper to me that, in enlisting me, he had done me a service, as, unlike the others, I should be immediately promoted. The rogue lied in his heart; but even a falsehood which coincides with vanity is ever welcome; and ten shillings more were speedily added to the honest earnings of the gentleman with three stripes on his arm.

It would be neither edifying nor amusing, were I to describe in detail the occurrences of that morning. Recruits very willing to drink, headed by a serjeant very anxious to benefit his friends, the landlords of all the pot-houses in town, were not likely to lack any thing in the way of noise and nonsense; and by noon the serjeant thought it high time to march his men to their quarters at the Castle. On our arrival there, we sat down to a dinner which, though it did not consist of "every

delicacy in the season," was at least very undeserving of the description which Crabbe gives of the fare of an English peasant — "plain but *not* plenteous."

Our serjeant, in fact, had catered with a determination to provide enough, and what was lacking in elegance of *cuisine* was amply atoned for in goodness and solidity of viands. For me it might as well have been a Barmecide feast, or three courses of baked brickbats; for, while we were as yet waiting for the red-armed Phillis of the Castle to bring in the dishes, I stood at the opened window looking into the main street of the town, and saw pass close beneath me a youngster who had left the school since I had, and whose jacket and cockaded hat shewed that his father had not neglected to sign his bond for him. Bitter, oh, very bitter were my feelings at that moment. There was a youth far inferior to me only a few weeks since, now raised above me so far that for me, a private soldier, even to speak to him, would be a presumption and an

insolence. He was a midshipman, placed in the road to distinction, and the society of gentlemen ; I, herded among fellows as ignorant as the neat cattle they had abandoned for the musket, and thought no more of by army surgeons, officers, ministers at war, and other functionaries of the great game of manslaughter, than the ammunition they would have to waste in learning to commit murder. The contrast shocked me so much as to make me visibly ill, and as I took my seat at the table the serjeant noticed my changed appearance with a greater degree of kindness than I should have given him credit for possessing. I passed the subject off by blaming my morning's potations, and as that was a source of indisposition which all present could understand, I was, greatly to my liking, allowed to refrain from either dining or drinking ; a course which I was the more readily suffered to take from my promise to take my share of the expense of the dinner. As soon as the cloth was withdrawn and the bill paid, I retired



to the bed-room which I had occupied the night before, and never did bereaved mother in her agony weep more passionately, or holy recluse pray more fervently, than I did during two hours that I thus stole from the noise and the companionship of my new and degraded state.

From this short seclusion and self-communing I derived unspeakable benefit. I resolved to bear my obscure and degraded lot with firmness, to forget what I *might* have been under more fortunate circumstances, and to leave no means untried by which to convert my present degradation into a source of reputation and aggrandizement. I had scarcely succeeded in mastering my more bitter and desponding feelings, and nerving my mind to this degree, when my chamber door was unceremoniously thrown open, and the serjeant, closely followed by his *pro tempore* corporal, rushed in. The former hesitated an instant; for my apparition was evidently as unexpected as it was agreeable to him. But he

was not the man to be long in manufacturing an excuse, and taking me familiarly by the hand, he jocularly accused me of being a milk-sop, and solicited my return to the parlour. I, too, was fast learning to dissemble, and though I was perfectly sure that he had so hastily entered my bed-room from fear of being minus a recruit, I gave him not the least hint of my suspicion, but, returning some answer, as jocular and insincere as his own remark, walked down with him to the disgusting scene of debauchery of which I was already so heartily wearied.

The remainder of the daylight we consumed in playing at cards ; and as I was an expert calculator, and, moreover, far cooler-headed than my company by this time had become, I played so successfully, that, when the tea-things were substituted for the cards, I was a winner of better than five pounds. A full fourth of this had, to his great annoyance, been abstracted in successive half-crowns from my worthy serjeant. This was performing the

part of the "old soldier" rather more strongly than he admired; and he took occasion to hint to me, with a most astute and confidential wink, that *he* had lost his money to me merely to enable me to win that of the rest of the company. The truth was, that I had played with the most scrupulous fairness; for cheating at cards is a meanness which even now, guilty and debased as I am, I am infinitely too proud to descend to. My naturally irascible temper had well nigh betrayed me into the imprudence of disputing the point with him; but an instant's reflection enabled me to govern and conceal my feeling; and I gave him two pounds, telling him, with an admirable imitation of his own knowing wink, that that would pay principal and interest. I believe the knave had only speculated upon getting back his own particular coin; for he received the money with most cordial thankfulness, and, for once in his life, did not attempt to increase his demands on finding them complied with.

## CHAP. V.

WHEN the candles were brought in, cards were again proposed; but the serjeant opposed the motion, alleging as his reason that they were too dull an amusement for a whole evening. But his real reason for eschewing a diversion to which he was notoriously and passionately addicted, was very foreign indeed to that which he alleged. Of his real reason he made me the confidant; and I derived from his information a sanguine hope of getting myself into notice earlier than I had previously thought possible.

The captain who commanded the recruiting party to which I now belonged was a highly-gifted yet debauched man; a sort of military

Sheridan, highly cultivated in mind, but somewhat prone to the coarser animal enjoyments. Though a brave and approved soldier, he had not been promoted as he deemed that his standing and his services entitled him to be; and he was consequently somewhat of a political free-thinker, though otherwise a strict disciplinarian. He was, moreover, a fervid and serious thinker as to religion, when his better nature was not overpowered by the excesses to which disappointment and a bruised spirit but too frequently impelled him. He was no great favourite at head-quarters; and, probably from that cause, he had acquired a liking for the wassail scenes of low company, though his naturally high mind would not suffer him to participate openly and actually in them. It was, probably, partly in the indulgence of this taste, and partly to observe the conduct and study the temper of the recruits, that he was, as the serjeant informed me, in the nightly habit of taking his pint of wine in the bar of the Castle. Seated there, he could

hear and see all that was going on without being observed; and, on the night of my enlistment, he had been not a little amused by the uproarious jollity of the party. Of me he had taken particular notice, and had made numerous inquiries of the serjeant as to my previous condition of life.

All this the serjeant informed me of subsequent to my returning him two pounds of my winnings; and I inwardly gratulated myself that I had not, by an untimely resistance to an unjust demand, deprived myself of intelligence which might prove so important; and upon which I forthwith determined to act with the utmost care and caution.

Of the *mixed* quality of the captain's nature, I rapidly formed my judgment, and determined not to show any symptom of the better yearnings of my own until I should have taken my full share in the more boorish conviviality of those among whom I was now ranked. To this determination, I was led by my persuasion that a sympathy of nature goes a great way towards

levelling merely conventional and artificial distinctions, and by my fear lest, by manifesting too early my superiority to my companions, I might lead the Captain to guess that his proximity was not unknown to me. Acting upon these thoughts, I sang, punned, recited, and so forth, for a couple of hours, as on the preceding night. When the frequent partial withdrawal of the blind which darkened the small window between the bar and parlour, convinced me that the Captain had been a long and not uninterested auditor, I suddenly and completely changed my tactics, and on being called on to sing, extemporized much, I wot, to the wonderment of the "ryghte merrie companie" who had never heard serious words sung elsewhere than at church, and who would have cheerfully exchanged the most serious of the Hebrew Melodies, had they then been written, for "Wapping Old Stairs," or "Dick Turpin was a dashing Blade," the following versès to a then highly popular air :—

Hast thou boldly mingled in battle fray,  
Where lance and faulchion flashed ?  
Hast thou marked the tall ship cleave her way,  
By angry billows lashed ?  
Thou hast seen a type of this mortal life,  
With its woes, its struggles, its cares, and strife.

Hast thou stood alone by the desolate hearth,  
Where erst the wassail rout  
Shook the whole fabric with their mirth,  
Loud song, and jocund shout ?  
Thou hast seen a type of the time to come  
When all that live shall for aye be dumb.

Hast thou wandered at eve, in thoughtful mood,  
And marked the sun's decline ?  
And deemed that he sank in the western flood,  
When to thee he ceased to shine ?  
Thou hast seen a type of thine own decay,  
A type of thine own last earthly day.

Hast thou watched upon some far mountain's height,  
For Sol to revisit earth ?  
And *thrilled* as his first faint gleam of light  
Announced the morning's birth ?  
Rejoice ! 'twas a type of the op'ning tomb,  
And of thy recall from its worms and gloom.

I had, *then*, taste, feeling, and a good voice ;  
and though the words themselves were of that



order of poetry which is said by Horace to be tolerated by neither Gods nor men, the air to which I adapted them gave them a pathos which lost nothing by its strange contrast to the scenes in which they were heard. The shaft flew to its mark; for my company had scarcely crowned their insincere laudation of what must have been a sore infliction to them, when "mine host" himself made his *entré*, and, winking at the serjeant, said, that a gentleman in the bar would be glad to hear the last song again. The serjeant pressed my foot in the way of admonition, and I repeated my song accordingly.

So! thought I, as a handsome bowl of punch, the gift of the "gentleman in the bar," was placed before me and the serjeant, so much for his better feeling; next time I'll aim at his discontent. And accordingly, when it again came to my turn to favour the good company, I extemporized the following verses, taking for my groundwork some clap-trap laudation which the serjeant had chaunted anent—"The

flag that's braved a thousand years, the battle  
and the breeze."

Yes! our flag has defied, for a thousand of years,

The wiles of the foe, and the rage of the breeze;

Attest it, swart' Afric and Parga in tears!

And our myriads that rot in the deep blue seas!

Yes! our flag has triumphantly waved in the gale,

And has flaunted at many a banquet of blood,

And the vultures that see it unfurl'd never fail

To find plentiful prey for their ravenous brood.

It has waved like a beautiful meteor in air,

And has floated where'er there was spoil to be seized,

And murder and rapine and shrieks and despair

Have been rife ere our *glorious* rage was appeased.

Now and then, lest the ardour for slaughter should cool,

When no slaves struck for freedom, or murmur'd at chains,

We taught great moral lessons to tyrants at school,

And our men fought like fiends—and got flogged for  
their pains.

Oh, God! that a nation should boast of a rag

So bloody, so filthy, so stained by misdeed!

Hide, Albion! your (mostly) victorious flag,

Till the wounds your fell tyranny gave cease to bleed!

Could the dead you have slain and the hearts you have  
crushed

Be made manifest here as hereafter they 'll be,

Your proud vauntings of FREEDOM and GLORY were hushed,

And millions that now are enslaved would be free!

"'Fore heaven!" quoth Cassio, "that is a more excellent song than the other;" and my captain seemed to be of the same opinion; for in a few seconds "mine host" was summoned, and in a like space of time returned with a second magnum of punch and the not unwelcome intelligence that, to the amount of ten shillings, "the gentleman in the bar" had settled for whatever farther refreshment the company might desire. I say the intelligence was not unwelcome; but I beg to exclude myself from the number of those who cared a doit about farther refreshment. All *I* cared about was the future consequence of my scheming. What that was remains to be seen.

It will easily be believed that neither the landlord nor the serjeant was inclined to leave the ten shillings of "the gentleman in the bar" unexpended; and as it was now understood that he had taken his departure, cards were again introduced, and, in the words of poor Burns, whose songs we had most barbarously murdered during the evening—

"The mirth and fun grew fast and furious."

I never till that night felt the full force of the Spartan practice of intoxicating the degraded Helots by way of warning the Spartan youth against that horrible *fons criminis*, inebriety. Certainly, no rational man can look in upon a scene of low debauchery, when the candles burn low in their sockets, and the revellers are far gone in frantic or idiotic intoxication, without turning away from it in disgust; and vowing, however ineffectually, to eschew strong drink and late hours.

How long our revel might have been kept up I cannot guess, had it not been suddenly and most painfully terminated. In the midst of the fierce excitement of play, the uncouth Babel of many voices was hushed in its senseless clamour by a low but clear and distinct voice. "George, you have killed me!" were the words uttered; and, as we all turned to the part of the room whence they proceeded, the door opened, and a woman entered, tottering with feebleness, and blanched to the ghastly paleness of a corpse. The wildest

and the loudest of our number quitted the table, and caught the unfortunate woman just in time to save her from falling heavily and lifeless upon the stone floor. A scene of painful confusion necessarily arose out of this most unexpected advent. The young man held his mother in his arms; twenty restoratives were recommended by as many voices; and when the unfortunate woman revived to a sense of her sorrow, she besought the serjeant in the most touching manner to give her back her only son—the only earthly comfort she possessed. The “rules of the service” know nothing about the homely but touching affections of the cottage hearth; and the serjeant truly said, that he had no more power in the matter than the woman herself. By dint, however, of assuring her that he would speak to the captain on the following day, he succeeded in persuading the wretched woman to return to her home; and she parted from her son—to see him no more. She died within a week.

There is something in utter wretchedness too powerful to fail of having effect even upon the rudest natures ; and there was not one of all that lately boisterous company who dissented from my proposal to terminate the revel for that night. We accordingly retired ; my companions to struggle in the night-mare of intoxication, or to dream of future fame and fortune to be won by future violence and rapine, and I to speculate, with my usually sanguine hopefulness, upon the possibility of the captain interesting himself on my behalf, and raising me instantly from the degradation of the ranks. As to my *ultimate* destiny, I drew upon my heated imagination so long upon that theme, that I became at length fairly cloyed with the excess of my imaginary prosperity, and the abundance of my fancied honours ; and when I at length slept, I had won the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, a seat in the Upper House, and an incalculable fortune, by my military achievements ; besides having enlisted in my favour the “ most sweet voices ” of the entire popu-

lation of Great Britain and Ireland, by my surpassing eloquence and profound statesmanship.

My sleeping dreams were as pleasant and as full of honours and riches as my waking ones had been; and I was anything but well pleased on being awakened by the application of a pint of cold water, honest measure, to my face and neck, and seeing the mischievous face of my friend, the serjeant, distorted with the laughter excited by my most uncomfortable awaking. I rose, however, with as good a grace as I could command, and, in a few minutes, descended to breakfast. As I passed onwards to the parlour, I saw the drum in the passage; and, on entering the room, inquired of the serjeant if he had any intention of parading us round the town again; adding, with a laugh, that if he had so, I for one should mutiny, as I thought once a week quite often enough for such an infliction.

“Devil a bit of parading,” said he; “only just to march through the town, and take the

road to Henley. We've orders to rejoin the regiment, captain and private, drummer and fifer, bag and baggage; and, by the butt-end of my musket, it is high time, too, when *cruities* go deserting, and the like. Look there!"

As he spoke, he shut the parlour-door, and thus disclosed to me poor George, the run-away son, seated in most melancholy plight, with his face sadly contused, and his wrists fastened tightly together with handcuffs.

"The devil!" said I.

"I say so, too," rejoined the angry non-commissioned officer: "the devil take such fellows! Here have I made him as drunk as a fifer, cooked his steaks to a turn, sung with him, drunk with him, played at cards with him, and treated him as if he'd been a born gentleman, or a full captain; and now he must try to give me the slip! It's high time we were off, say I. And here comes the breakfast; so fall to. ; Come, *cruity*, I'll slip



your ruffles for you while you eat, if you'll promise to be a good boy. What say you?"

"Curse you!" said the unfortunate fellow, "the poor old creature will die; and all of your lying tongue. And I'm no serjeant after all, and I can't take her home money whenever I like, and you'll not let me see her! Curse you, for ever!"

"Now that's true as if I said it myself," quoth the serjeant; "you're a full private, my boy, and you've brown Bess and a shilling a day. But let's have no bad words, or it'll be the worse for you, when we get to head quarters." Bad words, or good ones, were by this time quite beyond poor George's command; and my heart ached for him as he swayed himself to and fro on his chair, and sobbed in the deep agony of a too tardy repentance. I did my best towards comforting him, until reminded by the serjeant that our time was short, and that we had many miles to go between breakfast and dinner. The hint was

not thrown away upon me; and though the viands were pretty considerably diminished by the previous onslaughts of my comrades, I contrived to make a hearty meal, ere the tattoo of the drummer summoned me to fall in for my first march as a private soldier.

The Captain, I learned, had already set out for Henley, on horseback: and I, therefore, was obliged to continue in doubt as to his notions of me. But two circumstances occurred to persuade me, that I should meet with speedy promotion at head quarters. As I passed the bar, the landlord called me in and offered me the landlord's usual civility—a glass of spirits; and, as we parted, said, “You'll soon be promoted; scholars like you are scarce in the army.”

“I accept the omen,” said I, as I stepped into the street. Just as I did so, the serjeant, who was arranging his awkward squad, came up to me, and desired me to take my place in the rear and to act as corporal, and consider myself answerable for the safe conduct of the

men. This step he was induced to take by the necessity for himself and the corporal keeping, respectively, beside the handcuffed recruit, on whose part he apprehended some desperate attempt at escape. But I viewed the circumstance as indicative of the certainty of my rising in the service ; and it was with a light heart, and a glad step, that I marched from Reading.

Our march, though short, was tedious, and annoying enough, for our appearance was the signal for the coming forth of all the women and children of the various villages through which we passed, and the comments they made, expressive as they were of pity, were not by any means calculated to inspire us with a high opinion of the fate in store for us.

Upon my less imaginative companions, these remarks had not so much effect ; but I must confess that I had some occasional misgivings, which were the less pleasant as I had clearly taken an irrevocable step, whether for good or evil. But I soon succeeded in banishing all

painful or desponding feelings, and when we at length arrived at head quarters, I entered the barrack gate, when it was at length opened by the Corporal of the guard, in the firm conviction that I was on the high road to promotion and good fortune.

It was too late in the day when we reached the barracks to admit of our being measured, and so forth; and we were therefore shown to a barrack-room for the night, and left to repose there or seek amusement in the canteen, as we might list.

As it was too early for sleep, and the barrack-room, unfurnished, save by the low iron bedsteads which were ranged along each side of it, had any thing but a pleasant aspect as a sitting-room, it was speedily deserted for the canteen. On proceeding to this latter place, I caught a sight of the serjeant by whom I had been enlisted. We walked together for a few paces, and I was on the very point of following him into the room in the canteen, of which he opened the door, when he suddenly

turned round, and, half-seriously and half-drolly, said—"Not *just* yet! You *will* be a non-commissioned officer, no doubt; but till you are you must not come into this room." And, so saying, he pointed to the door on which were painted the words "for non-commissioned officers *only*;" and coolly walked in, closing the door behind him.

"*N'importe*," said I; and I made the best of my way down a long flight of stone steps, and entered the "Privates' Room." A more dismal den than this I have seldom seen. A small fire-place occupied the centre of one side, and along the other three ran tables and benches of rough elm; the walls and ceiling had been white-washed, but were now defaced by

——— "that cheap candle bawdery,"

which Herrick, after Horace, denounces; and the floor was stone, and so damp, as to chill my whole frame as I entered.

But, if the place itself had a melancholy aspect, it was by no melancholy guests that it

was tenanted, I trow. Most of the recruits had already seated themselves, and were fast getting rid of their miserable shillings in treating their new comrades. These latter were obviously not a little pleased with the Godsend, and not a little anxious to turn it to immediate advantage. The older and more barefaced sycophants were seated or standing around the raw boobies, plying them with compliments, advice, information, and promises; handing them their own ale with the most assiduous civility, and by no means allowing them to have the trouble to reach lights for their own pipes. Others, anxious for a share of the spoil, yet not quite far enough gone to claim it uninvited, were doing divers gymnastics. One fellow balanced the poker, and made faces, till the tears ran down the cheeks of the laughing bumpkins; while another challenged their admiration by standing on his head, and masticating a twopenny loaf and some cheese, hard enough to build a jail withal.

A brief glance around the room put me in possession of all the information I desired ; and as I had no mind to spend money for other people's amusement, and saw no chance of meeting with anything to amuse myself, I re-ascended the stairs, and walked into the barrack-yard. While there the captain passed me. He had scarcely done so before he returned, and after asking me some few questions as to my former life, and as to my education, promised that he would lose no time in endeavouring to get me into the Adjutant's office. " There," said he, " you will have the rank and the pay of a serjeant and the employment of a clerk : and there probably you will do well ; but you will never do for the ranks. You see too clearly and speak too openly to suit for so strictly governed a body as a regiment of soldiers. Cave, puer, cave !" And, so saying, he left me.

In this brief interview with the captain I saw room for increased hope ; but his parting words called my attention to a fact which, to

almost any one else would have been obvious enough without any monitor ; viz.—that to gain rank, or even to preserve life, a soldier should pay especial attention to that sage though vulgar admonition, “ Keep thy tongue within thy teeth.” And in the full determination to profit by this primer of practical hypocrisy, I retired to my bed.

On the following morning I awoke just before drum-beat, and by the time that we were summoned to the adjutant's office, I was ready to appear with as much neatness of coat, shoe, linen, and glove, as the most fastidious martinet of the most exquisite crack regiment could desire.

On entering the adjutant's office we were conducted into a long adjoining room, and our names being called over in the order in which we had enlisted, we were drawn up in line, commencing at a desk by which stood the colonel, the adjutant, the captain under whom I had enlisted, and our worthy serjeant, whose right hand rested on a standard, consisting of



a mahogany frame six feet high, having a top to be raised or depressed at pleasure, in a groove marked with a scale, in inches, subdivided into eighths. Man after man passed under this scale, and was found of the requisite height. But a dozen successively were rejected, because, though not deficient in stature, they were knock-kneed, or bandy legged, or narrow-chested, or short-necked, or,—as in one case,—Irish; a fault, this last, by the way, of which the gallant Colonel's own father and mother had not been quite guiltless, if a rich brogue and the name of O'Dogherty may be called as witnesses. I saw the captain's eye sparkle and his lip quiver, and I feared that the glaring and shameful partiality of the colonel would drive him to some "sudden flood of mutiny." But I had not much time for reflection. My name was called, and I advanced, bowed respectfully as I passed the officers, and stood on the platform of the standard.

"There," said the captain, as I passed, "I

hope this recruit will do. He, at least, is well-looking enough."

"And as he is well educated he'll be quite a treasure in my office; for my clerks are as wooden as the desks they write at;" said the adjutant, to whom the captain's situation seemed to give real pain.

"Exactly so, adjutant—" drawled the colonel—"pity he's not half an inch taller! Don't tip-toe, my man, stroke his hair down—it's very thick. Ah! full half—ay, three quarters of an inch too short! Come down, my man, and pass on."

I could have struck the old coxcomb as I passed him; for though I was barely the prescribed height, I was not yet seventeen years of age, and the height related to full-grown men. However, remonstrance would have been useless; and I walked sadly enough into the clerk's office to receive marching money to the town where I had enlisted. When I signed the receipt for this, the clerk who paid me and filled up my discharge,

expressed his surprise at their discharging me, as a small deficiency of height would not have made any difference in my usefulness in the office. "He's one of Captain ——'s recruits," said one of the clerks. "Oh! that explains it. None of them will pass." And so, I afterwards learned, it really turned out; and the captain lost all his money, besides, of course, being lightly thought of at the War Office.

"Very strange," thought I, "that *no one* will employ me. I tried the law, and lo! I found an oilman; from the navy I was driven by unusual kindness; and from the army I am discharged through a quarrel with which I have no kind of concern. What shall I try next? What shall I do after all?"

## CHAP. VI.

To ask questions is under some circumstances much more easy than to answer them satisfactorily. But though, on quitting the barracks, I could not very clearly see what would eventually become of me, I was perfectly well aware that I had not breakfasted; though so much time had been taken up by the ceremonials and forms which terminated in my discharge, that it was now fast approaching the noon of the day. And as the money I had brought with me from Reading, added to the "marching money" handed over to me at the adjutant's office, made no contemptible sum, I magnanimously resolved to breakfast first, and then take heed for the future.

I accordingly entered the first respectable public-house I came to, and had just finished my repast, when my friend, the serjeant, made his appearance. He condoled with me on my unexpected discharge ; and, for once in the way, I believe his words were the faithful interpreters of his thoughts : for, as he would have been entitled to a certain sum of sterling money for every recruit accepted by the colonel, the rejection of the entire lot of them by that elderly and despotic martinet was by no means a pleasant morning's occurrence to him. True it is, that, of the actual sums which had been paid, out of the captain's pocket, to the recruits, he of the stripes and halbert had made some very pretty pickings. But avarice is never satisfied ; and the serjeant considered himself a very ill-used and no less unfortunate person.

Grief, they say, is thirsty ; and I suppose that, unlike most popular sayings, which generally have a fallacy for their foundation, and a smartness of phrase for their disguise, the

saying is true: for the serjeant not only finished my modicum of ale while he condoled with me, but incontinently called for another quart at my expense. As I really did not entirely dislike him—for I thought him very well inclined to do any one a service, if he could do so without the loss of a farthing to himself—I made no objection to so small a matter. We discussed our ale, therefore, in right good fellowship, and were exceedingly unanimous and emphatic in our censure of the arbitrary and unhandsome conduct of the colonel. But when the worthy serjeant proposed spirits as a substitute for ale, and cards to vary our conversation, I at once saw how the matter stood; and determined to beat a retreat while I had yet the means of doing so in comfort. To all the pressing and bland entreaty of my *bon compagnon*, therefore, I returned a peremptory though civil denial. To do him justice, he took his disappointment with tolerably good grace; and we parted as civilly as we had met.

"He who cannot live in London, can live no where," is an adage which I remembered to have read in some tome, of which I remembered not another line; and, on pondering over the past, I saw no reason to hope for success in my search of a mean of subsistence elsewhere than in that mighty Babylon, whither I once more bent my steps.

On reaching the metropolis, I proceeded, as if by instinct, to the coffee-house at which I had been wont to read the periodicals; and, in the very first paper which I took up, saw an advertisement for an amanuensis and reader. It was late in the evening, but I proceeded immediately to the house of an eminent printer in the city, where the address was to be obtained of the gentleman who advertised. I asked for the card; and was requested by the printer, a very gentlemanly person, to read a page of Cicero's Epistles. I read it so entirely to his satisfaction, that, without subjecting me to any farther examination, save as to a short specimen of my handwriting, he gave me the

card; requesting, at the same time, that I would not present it until the following morning.

Never did sentimental gentleman on the eve of being made "the happiest man in the world," by having his fate indissolubly intertwined with that of as idle, useless, and gabbling a personage as himself, count the lagging hours in more feverish restlessness and anxiety than I did during that livelong night; and few ploughmen in the country, or sweeps in London, saw the sun earlier than I did, when the morning at length arrived. Always sanguine, I did not on this occasion entertain the slightest doubt as to my obtaining the employment I sought. As to ability, I was *sans peur*—as to character, *sans reproche*; and the only point upon which I deemed it at all necessary to speculate was, whether my salary would be a hundred or a hundred and fifty pounds a-year.

At as early an hour as my imperfect notion of etiquette permitted me to think correct, I walked to Bloomsbury Square; and, having



stated my business to the livery servant, was shown into an extremely handsome study. A full hour elapsed before any one again entered the room ; but I could very well have dispensed with all entries for a much longer space. Need I better account for that fact, inconsistent as it may seem with my anxiety for employment, than to state that, in that hour, I had read, or rather devoured, the first volume of *Waverley*, which had then not long been published?— Blessings, and a long—long life of blessing and blessed usefulness, to Scott!

He hath taught the human heart the way to peace,  
By teaching it the way to charity ;  
And, calling up alike the serf and lord,  
The dead of ages, to the living world  
Hath shown how greatness, when deformed by vice,  
Must shrink from contrast with hut-shelter'd virtue !

Pish ! this is no place for my unpublished verses, eulogistic or otherwise. Well, at the expiration of about an hour, the door opened, and the servant who had shown me into the study led in a tall, thin, and most gentleman-

like personage ; upon whose features death had already set his pallid seal, and in whose eyes, lustrous though they still were, no speculation beamed :

“ So thick a drop serene had quenched their ray,  
Or dim suffusion veiled.”

I was much interested by the appearance, and still more by the subsequent conversation, of this gentleman. He inquired most minutely into my qualifications, and was at length so well satisfied on that head, that he desired me to write down the name of my late classical tutor—to whom I referred him as to my moral character, and promised to send to him in the course of the day. So far all was well ; but there yet remained one point, which to me, at least, was anything but an unimportant one, to be discussed :—the amount of salary. After a good deal of fidgetting and stammering, I at length contrived to hint at the propriety of our coming to some understanding on that point.

Few disappointments have been more com-

plete than that which I felt, when the doctor, —the gentleman, with whom I was thus negotiating was a learned and skilful medical man—proposed, after some reflection, to give me forty pounds per annum.

“And passing rich with forty pounds a year,” thought I: but I gave my thoughts and my disappointment no utterance. On the contrary, I signified my acceptance of the offered terms; only stipulating for a weekly instead of a quarterly payment; and took my departure on the understanding that my engagement would commence on the following morning, if my reference as to moral character should prove satisfactory.

Long after I had got beyond Bloomsbury Square, I continued to repeat the words, “Forty Pounds!” It seemed scarcely credible that such services as the doctor required at my hands *could* be valued at so paltry a sum. But a little reflection enabled me to see that, if the doctor had undervalued my services, I, on the other hand, had in my speculative estimates of

the preceding night, no less overvalued them ; and my reflections upon the subject terminated in my feeling profoundly thankful, that I had at length obtained employment, and determined to live so frugally as to make my salary, small as it was to be, sufficient for my wants.

Truth to say, I think the doctor made his bargain sufficiently well to do no discredit to his native county of Yorkshire. His skill, as a physician, had for many years secured him a practice which produced him an almost princely revenue, but at the same time taxed his powers so severely as to have prematurely broken down his originally fine constitution. But though he had now long laboured under the effects of pulmonary consumption, he was so devoted to learning in general, and to the learning connected with his own profession in particular, that he had addicted himself so closely and so constantly to night study, as at length to have become all but stone blind. Nor could even this calamity subdue the martyr-lover of philosophy ; and conscious as

he was, that his wick of life burnt low, and flickeringly in its socket, he was now about to commence, with the aid of an amanuensis, a work which, with the prophetic self-confidence of true genius, he *knew* would win him a permanence of fame, and alleviate human sufferings, and prolong human life, long long years after his sufferings should be among the forgotten things of earth, and his life have merged into an immortality.

Though my mind was daily becoming more insensible to the romantic impulses which had hitherto been its almost sole occupants, and though the complete destitution and utter want of friends and associates which I had suffered under, and pondered upon, for many weeks, had begun to have the effect of hardening my heart, and irritating my temper, I was as yet too natural to fail to be touched and softened by the contemplation of a devotedness so high, and, as it seemed to me, so holy in its aspirations and its object. And the pleasure I anticipated in aiding, however humbly,

in the last and greatest work of a scholar so ripe, and a patriot and philanthropist so real, seemed, after the first burst of disappointed *amour propre* had passed, to be more than an adequate compensation for the extreme smallness of the pecuniary remuneration.

In his younger days, the doctor had been deeply imbued with scepticism, but he had at length arrived at a more healthy state of mind, and was now deeply impressed with the truth and the importance of religion. So true is the remark of Lord Bacon, that while a little learning makes a sceptic, a great deal surely makes a Christian of its possessor.

True to my appointment, on the following morning, I again waited on the doctor, and learned, as indeed I was certain would be the case, that my reference was in the fullest degree satisfactory. My labours, in consequence, commenced immediately. I alternately read to him, and wrote to his dictation; and it was a touching and beautiful thing to see that pale and thoughtful countenance lighted

up, as the enthusiastic author warmed with his subject; while the sun's rays shone brightly upon the sightless orbs into which they could introduce no eidolon.

My hours of attendance were from ten till four, and we generally passed the four first hours in work; while during the last two I read to him, either some religious treatise, or one of Scott's novels, then in the very height of their popularity. The Doctor was among the most sincere and warm of Scott's admirers; and literally loved his personal character upon every point but one. That one, was his, as the doctor thought, too facile forgiveness of Byron, whose attack upon him, in his celebrated and spiteful satire, he could not speak of with any degree of patience;—not that he thought the literary censure *wholly* unjust, but on account of the meanness of Byron accusing Scott of being mercenary, because he did not create value to give it away; and then, as soon as public favour enabled him, selling his own lordly produc-

tions with the minute attention to "filthy lucre" of a Houndsditch broker. \*

Of Paley, popular as he is, he spoke with positive detestation. He said that the arch-deacon wrote like a barrister, endeavouring to make the worse appear the better reason. The *petitio principii* abounded, he said, throughout his works; whence he inferred that, though the theologian unquestionably arrived by correct argument at sound conclusions, he was not a sincere believer in the first principles upon which the whole force and validity of his reasonings depended; and, consequently, though a believer, already sound in first principles, might read the work with pleasure from its literary merits, and with entire assent to all it affirmed, yet he, and still more the unfortunate sceptic, would see a vacuum at the very outset.

Were it not that my task would be lengthened too far to be completed in my brief days, I could note down a thousand of criticisms, always strikingly original, and generally just,



with which our labour was occasionally lightened. But I must return to the record of my own life, of which, alas! but little more of virtuous action remains.

For many months my situation, excepting only the small amount of my salary, was one of unmixed pleasure. I entered into the feelings of my employer, and interested myself in the progress of his great work with a zeal which no mere hireling could feel, or even comprehend. Indeed, in the memoirs of the doctor, written by his sole surviving relative, a sister, a lady of the most masculine intellect, joined, as is rarely the case, to a truly feminine elegance of person and manners, my services are spoken of in the highest terms of praise.

But, though my employment necessarily familiarized me with, so to speak, the mechanism of authorship, and gave me a habit of industry in searching for facts, and of regularity and accuracy in treasuring and arranging them when found, the almost exclusive attention paid by the doctor to the great lights of his

own profession, prevented my mind from benefiting by my reading with him to the extent which otherwise it must have done.

Moreover, there was one very bad circumstance in my connexion with the doctor—it left me too much of my time at my own disposal. Having no acquaintance, my sole resource for passing that time was the coffee-room ; and it consequently happened that, while I obtained a greater amount of *general* knowledge than persons of a far greater age usually possess, my knowledge lacked consolidation, and I remained ignorant of the greater lights, whose works, of course, were not to be found in such a place. The time, too, was one of great political excitement ; and, from being a contemptuous observer of one party, and a merely speculative opponent of the other, I gradually progressed to a burning and fierce desire to take my share in the loud war of dissonant opinions.

Nor will this seem either extraordinary or unpardonable to those who reflect upon the

potent influence exercised by circumstances upon human thought and human action. Naturally warm in temper and lively in intellect, well educated, curious, shrewd in observation, and quick in judgment, but poor, friendless, desirous of distinction, but despairing of obtaining it by any ordinary means, and vain to the last degree of my peculiar genus of vanity, was it not inevitable that, when my whole evenings were spent in chiefly political reading, I should become hungry and thirsty for the fierce activity and feculent influence of the demagogue? Unhappily for my future peace, I did so; and, still more unhappily, I formed an acquaintance with a man but too well calculated to urge me on, and to teach me to lash my discontent into a furious hate of those who seemed, and only seemed, to be the authors of the evils of which I was impatient.

This man I accidentally met at a political lecture-room; and, in the course of our first conversation, he contrived not only to discover my talents, but also to find and touch

the spring to which they were ever obedient—my vanity. But he was too remarkable a man to be described at the end of a chapter; and my connexion with him must be described in detail in its proper place.

## CHAP. VII.

THE great work of my employer occupied us for very many months. At first his health seemed to improve by the excitement of composition ; and his looks were so much more flattering than when I first saw him, that I entertained sanguine hopes of his valuable life being, for some years more, prolonged. But his looks were as deceitful as my hopes were vain ; and, as we approached the conclusion of the most voluminous and important of all his labours, a very striking and rapid change for the worse took place in his health.

Towards the close of a very cold but very bright winter's afternoon, the doctor desired me to read to him that painfully graphic des-

cription of the death aspect which is called, from its author, the *Facies Hippocratica*. I read it to the end, and then remained silent, with the volume still opened upon the table before me; and, imagining that he had referred to Hippocrates in the ordinary course of composition, awaited his order to write, or to refer to some other passage of the author. But finding that, after the lapse of several minutes, he still remained sunk in reverie, I ventured to ask him if I should translate and insert the passage. He sighed very deeply; and then, desiring me to close the book, and replace it on its shelf, proceeded to dictate to me in his usual nervous tone, but with more than his usual rapidity.

After I had written about half a dozen pages, he again paused. This he was frequently in the habit of doing, to allow me to keep pace with him; and I usually expressed my readiness to proceed by saying, "The next."

When, therefore, he had made what I consi-

dered a reasonable pause, I demanded, "The next."

"Finis—" he replied, and then added, "*coronat opus*," and fell back, senseless and pale as monumental marble.

I rang the bell violently, and then raised the sufferer in my arms, and desired the servant, when he entered, to summon the nearest surgeon. He soon arrived, and bled my still insensible employer; but though he opened both the jugular vein and the temporal artery, scarcely a drop of blood could be obtained; and, after half an hour of the most painful anxiety I ever endured, I was compelled to acknowledge to my unwilling heart that the sacrifice long offered was at length accepted; that the long chained and struggling spirit had spurned from it the trammels and the bondage house of earth;

"And Science's self had slain her noblest son."

In the latter years of my life the first thought

which such an occurrence would have caused me would have referred to my own loss. But I had not then been stung into utter insensibility, and I can most conscientiously affirm that the long-subsequent death of my best-beloved child did not cause me a more violent and *pure* agony than that which I felt as the lifeless body of that good and great man was borne from the scene of his labours, of usefulness, and love. I seemed not to have lost an employer, but a friend; one whom I viewed with a regard mingled with a something of reverence, equally for his virtues and his splendid intellect; and when his remains were followed to the grave by a long train of mourning coaches and private carriages, there was not in all that solemn and imposing train a mourner, save his sister, who was more sincerely or more painfully affected than the pale, solitary, and unnoticed pedestrian who walked by its side, and who sat beside the grave of the departed one long hours after all other



mourners had returned again to their business or their pleasures.

But the sincerest and least worldly grief must sooner or later give place to that stern necessity of self-preservation which makes "the luxury of woe," like all other luxuries, too expensive to be indulged in by the poor; and in a very few days after I had seen my first employer interred, I felt the necessity of bestirring myself to find out another. True, I was not quite destitute of money, but I knew the volant tendency of his majesty's golden effigies too well to be free from anxiety. I rose, therefore, at an early hour every morning, and read quite through the advertisements of the principal papers; and just as I was beginning to despair of seeing anything to suit, I met one morning with an advertisement for an Amanuensis.

I waited on the advertiser at the place named; a court, called a *square*—what a beggarly thing London pride is!—near Fleet

Street, and was shown up two pair of villainously steep stairs, and left to cool my heels upon the landing-place while the sluttish wench who did duty for a set of servants, went, as she said,—“*to tell the doctor.*”

*The doctor* was graciously pleased to be *at home*, and I was ushered into a large and not ill-furnished room; which was redolent exceedingly of the fumes of whisky and red herrings.

Very unlike my former doctor was he whom I now made my bow to. In the prime of manhood, built in that mould in which nature casts all whom she intends to guide the plough and leave divine philosophy alone, and possessing a manly but extremely heavy and stupid physiognomy, *the doctor* sat at a table covered with MSS. in small scraps, and *leaves* torn out of printed books which lay in confusion upon the floor. I have more than once boasted of my acuteness; but for this once at least I was at fault. The blue frock coat and hessian boots said as plainly as garments could that the church knew

not this doctor; and I pondered, while he handed me a chair and prepared to deliver himself of a speech upon the admirable stupidity of those who could by possibility look upon him and yet trust him with their health.

My doubts and meditations were interrupted by the Doctor handing me a small volume, and inquiring if I was acquainted with it. I looked at the title-page, and having read its announcement, viz. "The Youth's Manual," returned the book with a reply in the negative.

"Not know that book! Why it sells by thousands; the attorney-general spoke an hour in its praise the other day, and the Lord Chief Justice pronounced it a perfect *multum in parvo*. Do you understand Latin?"

"Not very perfectly."

"Ah! not gone beyond Phœdrus or Ovid, I suppose."

"On the contrary, I have read all the historians and most of the poets; and I have studied the writings of many of the learned

editors and commentators of modern times ; but I do not as yet venture to think myself master of more than "little Latin and less Greek."

"Strange you have not seen the Manual, though ; very strange. It's a wonderful work. Have you been employed in this way before ?"

"Not precisely in *this* way ; but I have been for some time Amanuensis to the well-known Dr. ———."

"Well known ! I never heard his name. What did he write ?"

I named all his published works, but my auditor still knew him not ; for the works of that profound thinker were upon such subjects that the furtive caterer for studious juvenility could have stolen nothing from them. And this small thief of truisms, this rummager and cutter-up of still-born encyclopædias, and unconsidered grammars ; this pettiest of all literary pretenders—this brainless booby, could sneer as he repudiated all knowledge of the great soul which had left not a few of its emanations upon the unworthy earth ! Nothing but

a sense of the vital importance of obtaining immediate employment could have restrained me from reproving his insolence in a strain of indignant justice. But the freshness and sincerity of early youth had departed from my soul now. I had looked, partly in fact, but chiefly in meditation, too long upon the dark side of human affairs to sacrifice aught to the majestic grandeur of truth. I was a man now, struggling among men, and both able and determined to be as false and as self-seeking as they.

As I gave the prating idiot ample scope and verge enough for all the *niaiseries* he desired to vent, and cautiously abstained from letting either tongue or eye disclose the secrets of my thoughts, our conversation proceeded amicably enough, and our interview terminated in my being engaged at a weekly salary of a guinea, to steal facts from such books as he should place before me, and to put them into terse and elegant language.

This task I performed so well, that when

I had been employed about three weeks, the Doctor—LL. D. and several other initials graced the name of this worthy—raised his price with the bookseller for whom he manufactured books by two guineas per sheet; but without making any corresponding advance in my salary, though I wrote him fully four sheets a week. His meanness in this particular, I should probably have taken no notice of, but he at length grew to be any thing but punctual in the payment of my pittance; and when he at length left me unpaid for five successive weeks, I threw up the employment in disgust, and firmly resisted all his endeavours to wile me back again.

This injustice I have ever since considered as a link in the grand chain of my doom; an unconscious agent in impelling me to that misery which I was destined to bear from the moment that I rejected the employment which my parent commanded me to accept. My time was now come to taste *real* misery. Hitherto I had possessed something like

self-respect, and he who possesses that can never be entirely wretched. But I now entered upon a course of life which no sophistry could justify ; which no success could gild ; and by the pettiest of private vices—Vanity, I was spurned on to the most heinous of public crimes—treason.

## CHAP. VIII.

IN a former chapter, I alluded to my meeting with a person by whom my political wrong-headedness was encouraged and increased. While in the employment of the plagiarist LL.D., I had, Heaven knows, not too much leisure time upon my hands; but all that I had I employed in reading, or in attending lectures and discussions; and to these I was constantly accompanied by Captain Arthur, as resolute and discontented a person as ever despotized in the name—oh, how abused and desecrated a name!—of liberty, or made patriotism the pretext for plunder. The cadet of a highly respectable provincial family, he



was sent abroad to be educated, and at an early age entered into the service of the French republic, and fought with the courage which is so often found in the mere hireling that I scarcely consider it a praiseworthy quality. With the downfall of Napoleon, Arthur lost not only his military rank, but also some civil emoluments which he had contrived to obtain from the Emperor. During many of the latter years of his residence abroad, he had maintained no correspondence with his friends at home; and when he was compelled to hurry back to England, on the restoration of the Bourbons, he learned that his father had died in undiminished resentment of his long and undutiful neglect, and left the entire of his property to a distant relative. That relative was not ungenerous: he allowed the disinherited son a moderate annuity, and procured him a Captaincy of Militia. When I met him, he had forfeited his relative's friendship by gross and notorious immoralities; and had

been deprived of his commission in the Militia, though he was called Captain, — “a good travelling name—” to the hour of his death.

If we could pry into the inmost hearts of even the most seemingly pure patriots of either ancient or modern days, how little should we see to thank or to admire them for, even in their unexceptionably good deeds! For should we not see there lurking, and polluting all thoughts and all feelings, avarice which a world's wealth could not satiate; private hate festering into public opposition; envy of the plunderer veiling its ghastly paleness beneath pretended sympathy with the plundered; debauchery seeking means of enjoyment; crime seeking impunity; ambition eager for its bauble; malice for its revenge? Alas! He who would not hate mankind must take care not to study them; he must avoid prying into the heart of his friend; and still more must he avoid the rigid and impartial examination of his own. “There is nothing new under the sun:” we may *seem* to progress in virtue and

in knowledge, but it is only seeming : the one black pestilent drop still makes our actions spring *from* evil, even when they tend to good.

The first time that I met Captain Arthur, we were among the auditors of a political quack whose celebrity, now no more, was then at its acme. During three mortal hours, this person had been spouting the most obvious truisms ; among which were assertions of the desirableness of every man having the means to study and to travel to whatever extent he might think proper. These and a thousand other more or less desirable things the lecturer affirmed could be brought about by a certain system, which system he averred he had the power of bringing into play. All this, it is very true, he had said a thousand times before in a thousand different places ; and the mere fact of his having in a long series of years done literally nothing towards bringing about his moral Millenium was quite sufficient to convince *me* that the verbiage with which he cheated his auditors, and probably himself

into the bargain, was as mischievous a tissue of impracticable theory founded upon unavailable fact as ever cheated the ear to disappoint the hope. But he had his disciples; not one of whom would see any inconsistency in his conduct and promises. At the conclusion of a long, and, to do him justice, not an inelegant declamation, the lecturer demanded, in a tone of triumph, "And what is to prevent the great human family from ultimately, if not immediately, co-operating thus, and thus enjoying?"

"Selfishness!" I replied, before I could reflect upon the impropriety of my making a reply to the question asked by the orator. It was too late to repair my error, when I discovered that I had committed one. The eyes of the whole assembly were turned upon me; and the lecturer mildly demanded of me if I had any other remark to make. I replied that I had most unwittingly interrupted him; but that it seemed to me that a sufficient reply to

all that he had ever said or written in favour of his darling system was contained in that one word—selfishness ; that selfishness was as innate and as ineradicable from the heart of *living* man—contemplating the *race* man, and not this or that extraordinary individual—as its pulsations, or the warm stream which it propelled through the whole sublime anatomy.

The lecturer replied to me at great length, and with great animation ; but, as far as I could follow his tortuous and discursive reasoning, his reply was—

“ A tolerable sample, on the whole,  
Of what the learned would call *rigmarole*.”

However, it caused much vehement cheering from all parts of the room ; and I was infinitely too well pleased to escape from the torture of being steadfastly stared at by some three hundred and fifty pair of eyes, to attempt anything in the way of rejoinder or explanation.

But though this my first attempt at oratory

had been a signal and utter failure, as to its effect upon the great majority of my hearers, there was one upon whom it had made a very different impression. That one was the, subsequently, but too celebrated Captain Arthur.

## CHAP. IX.

"WELL done!" said Arthur to me, as we descended from the lecture-room: "you completely answered the gabbling fool."

"Yet the sense of the meeting was unequivocally against me."

"The *nonsense* of it was. To call forth the cheers of a miscellaneous mob, you must declaim, not reason. Much sound and fury are required, but no sense. Clap-trap; the current patriotic slang of the day; a little about Hampden and Sydney, and a good deal about "British spirit," and "the voice of the people;" are the chief requisites for a successful harangue. You will never be a popular speaker; but you have the stuff for better

things. May I beg the favour of your company to-morrow to dinner? I ask it *really* as a favour; and it is one which I would ask only of a man of sound and sterling ability."

If I had been invited to a pedestrian tour of the wastes of Siberia upon such terms, I should have accepted; and I accordingly accepted the captain's card, and promised to see him on the following day.

I was punctual to my engagement; and, after encountering considerable difficulties in finding the obscure street in which my Amphytrion was located, arrived at his door. Though I had not anticipated anything like splendour in the situation of such a man as I had correctly judged Captain Arthur to be, I must candidly confess that I was not prepared to find him in so miserable a place as that which he actually occupied. A small room at the top of the house served him for chamber, study, and dining-room; and the chief of its furniture consisted of two broken chairs, a



rickety table, from which the paint had disappeared in many places, and left the original deal planks bare, a very shabby sofa bedstead, and two or three boxes, containing the library and wardrobe of my perverse and ill-fated host.

In this miserable apartment I was welcomed by one, unquestionably, of the finest and most athletic men I ever saw; and my heart ached as I contrasted his polished manners and noble features with the wretchedness of his accommodations. Shall I confess the truth? I, at the same time, inwardly felt something like contempt for him. I thought that, had I his physical and mental qualities, such beggarly accommodations should not be mine; and I thought, also, that the calm and unconscious air with which he bade me welcome to his squalid domicile arose from his mind having utterly given way to circumstances. In this, however, I was mistaken: it was stern resolution, not weakness, that made him feel as

much at ease in his ill-furnished garret, as he would have done in the most superbly-ornamented saloon.

Our dinner was plain indeed, but good, and put down in a style of neatness that rather surprised me; and my host did the honours of his table with a courtesy, which made me more than once look upon him with a feeling of mingled pity and regret: regret that his conduct had not been more judicious, or his fortune more favourable; and pity for the straitened and galling circumstances by which it was but too obvious that he was surrounded.

After the removal of the cloth, we conversed long and earnestly upon the politics of the day; and I was not yet sufficiently cold and practised to strip the fallacies of my host of the disguise of fervid and elegant language, and a vividness of manner, which literally carried away my judgment, and drew me to the speaker with a feeling of deep admiration and regard. And, though I subsequently learned to value his declamations in favour of liberty at the

lowest possible rate, and to view him in the light of a hater only of that tyranny which he was precluded from practising, I am even now of opinion that there were moments, brief, indeed, and of rare occurrence, when he felt as fervidly as he spoke, and forgot the cravings of the man of ambition in the aspirations of the man of benevolence. But if I am even correct in judging thus far favourably of him, his sincerity being too brief and unfrequent to have any influence upon his designs or his conduct, tells but little in his favour; and is chiefly worthy of notice as illustrating the remark of the profoundest philosophers, that none are wholly bad; a remark which the world thinks of as if it were a truism, and acts *against*, as though it were the most ridiculous and false of assumptions.

Accustomed from his early boyhood to the decision of disputed points, by the summary processes of stabbing and shooting the disputants to whom he happened to be opposed, theories, more especially those which proposed

the goodness of man's nature as the basis of their hope, and the enlightenment of his intellect as the chief instrument of their realization, were Captain Arthur's aversion; and the deep, stern tone in which I had pronounced the single word, "selfishness," as the all-sufficing reply to the florid harangue of the lecturer, showed the lover of the sword that my heart was already far gone in that least curable of all misanthropy, which scorns first, and then utterly hates, and fiercely combats.

Hence it was that he pressed me to visit him, in the hope of winning me to join him in a dark and desperate attempt which he was about to make to throw his whole native nation into confusion, with the desire—not avowed, indeed, but existing, and, ere long, very obvious to me—that *he* might exhibit to the astounded and gazing nations a new proof of the close and constant connexion between impatience of obscurity and desire of despotic power.

*	*	*	*
*	*	*	*

For nearly half a day I have been endeavouring, and only vainly endeavouring, to feel as I then felt—to *imagine* a comparative degree of innocence. Could I do this, I might hope to reconcile my junction with Captain Arthur with the supposition of my own sanity when I made it. But the sneering and cold Mephistophiles of the heart has rendered it impossible for me now even to imagine an impulsive feeling—a cheating of the sterner judgment by the warmer though mistaken boundings of the young bosom; and I must content myself with accurately recording my deeds, leaving it to those who shall read of them to philosophize upon their latent causes. Discontented as I was with my position in society, it was no difficult matter for Arthur to persuade me that physical rather than moral force was the desirable mean by which to subvert those institutions to which I falsely ascribed my evils; nor was it more difficult to make me believe that, in the new order of things to which we were to wade through a sea of blood, my

talents would obtain me a place foremost among the foremost of the champions of their country's freedom, and the wielders and rulers of their country's destinies.

The vanity, and the utter disregard to truth and justice, which must have combined in my heart at that time, to enable me to entertain such preposterous wishes, and to form such atrocious resolutions, seem now scarcely credible. And even more surprising than those seems the complacent unconsciousness with which I plumed myself upon my patriotism, and elevated my iniquity into a virtue and a triumph. But so it was; and I entered into the frantic views of Arthur with a fierce and burning zeal and activity, which speedily made me indispensable to him. A treasonable society had long secretly existed, of which Arthur was the moving soul; and to this desperate band I was at length introduced.

I remember my initiation well. It was on a bitter winter's night that I and Arthur sallied forth from his lodging, and made our way to a

still more squalid and obscure part of the town. After a long walk and frequent doublings, we stopped in front of a ruinous but extensive building, which had formerly been used for the purposes of some manufacture. My conductor applied his pass-key to the outer door, and we entered silently and in darkness. I must own that it was with no very comfortable feeling that I stood alone and unarmed in the passage, while Arthur groped his way forward into the interior of the building. Nor was the pleasantness of my situation vastly enhanced by the interruption of the half reverie into which I had fallen, by the sudden apparition of a stalwart African, who entered by a side door communicating with the stable-yard. No sooner did the light of his lantern flash upon and discover me, than he flew towards me with the fury of a wounded lion, shouting the while, "A spy! a spy!" at the very top of a discordantly coarse voice. The sable patriot was six feet high if he was an inch, and proportionably muscular. His hand was already grasping

my throat, and my fate would have been speedily decided, when lights appeared at the end of the passage; and Arthur, speaking in the short and decisive tone with which his old habits had made him familiar, exclaimed, "Hold! he is a friend!" Is there something in the mere commission of violence which lashes the brute portion of our nature into a fury, and urges our hot pulses into a rapture of rapidity? I think there is. The African withdrew his vast hand slowly, and with seeming reluctance, from my already blackened throat; and his eyes glared, and his white teeth grinned in frightful contrast to his ebon skin, as he muttered, "If he *had* been a spy!" —an apostrophe to which he added much such a union of yell, growl, and grating of the teeth, as I should expect to elicit by the act of disturbing a wolf in his first meal for a fortnight. Frankly, I believe the man never liked me: my rescue deprived him of an opportunity of performing what he would have deemed a meritorious act of strangulation; and he seemed



to think that, in proving to be other than a spy, I had cheated him out of the luxury of a justifiable homicide.

Arthur, and two or three of the conspirators who had accompanied him, on hearing the alarm given by the black, were extremely profuse and anxious in their apologies; and even the African contrived to growl out something like a confession of too great hastiness; to which, still feeling the imprint of his fingers, and reflecting that a couple of minutes more of their compression would have left me as dead as Julius Cæsar, I fear I did not listen with a very placable or forgiving air.

In point of fact, I gazed for a minute or two upon the accomplices of Arthur without uttering a syllable; debating mentally the while whether I should not resent the affront so far as to make it a pretext for having nothing more to do with the fraternity or its chief.—But a rapid glance at all the circumstances convinced me that Arthur and his confederates were not likely to suffer me to depart, save as

a sworn accomplice; moreover, the black was still close by me, and between me and the door; and I had had too convincing a proof of his prowess to be at all desirous to make any farther acquaintance with it. Accordingly, I smiled a most hypocritical smile, and put a stop to all farther apology by assuring the captain that I had been "more frightened than hurt;" and I was then introduced to the remaining members of the society.

They were about a hundred in number: some of them were obviously mechanics, driven to desperation by the pressure of the times, and an ignorant misapprehension of the cause of their sufferings;—others were shabby gentlemen in their appearance; and, judging by their subsequent conversation, I should pronounce them to be, like their leader, Arthur, broken gentlemen, eager to retaliate upon society the evils which they falsely ascribed to its injustice, and really endured from their own vices.

It was a strange, wild scene! Ascending a ladder, and through a trap-door, formerly used

for the admission of bales of goods from the lower to the upper floor of the manufactory, I suddenly found myself in a lofty and wide room of some two hundred feet in length. At the upper end of this was a huge fire-place, filled with flaming faggots supplied by some of the timbers of the more ruinous parts of the building. In front of this ran a long table, clumsily put together, and covered, when I entered, with blunderbusses, cutlasses, papers, and various kinds of refreshments. Upon these last not a few of the assembled conspirators were displaying the sharpness of their appetites; and their gaunt cheeks, and the ravenous manner in which they devoured the coarse viands, told me at once that their unfortunate condition, rather than any reasoning, had caused them to associate themselves with Arthur; who leaned against the chimney-piece, with folded arms and knitted brows, and gazed upon the ravenous doings of his subordinates rather with the grim superiority of Satan, scowling above the yet prostrate and astonished fiends, than with the

pitying pain which would find a place in the bosom of a man really sympathizing with his fellows, and really believing their miseries to be produced by tyrannous misrule.

I watched his countenance during the few minutes that he thus stood. Had I earlier seen it wear such an expression, I should have avoided committing myself with him. But it was now too late. I had been seen in all parts of town with him ; and the fame of "the young speaker" whom Captain Arthur had connected with him, had already made its way not merely to all the discontented in the metropolis, but also to those whose duty and interest alike demanded them to be alert in repressing tumult and silencing sedition.

## CHAP. X.

WHEN the hungrier portion of the assemblage had at length eaten its fill, and three or four more members had arrived, and been, after much caution on the part of the black, who was our seneschal, admitted, Arthur seated himself at the head of the table, and introduced me formally and by name to the meeting; though I had elsewhere seen and spoken to most of the persons of whom it was composed. The business of the evening then commenced; various documents were read to the meeting, and a discussion ensued upon the state of public affairs, and the proceedings rendered necessary by it. Formerly, all who belonged to this desperate society had been,

or affected to be, as anxious for an immediate appeal to the sword as Arthur himself really was and continued to be. But, more recently, as the day appointed for the grand explosion drew nigh, some of the less desperate and sanguinary spirits quailed at the startling magnitude of the purposed atrocity; and instead of the unanimous assent, almost amounting to actual servility, with which Arthur had been accustomed to have the lightest intimation of his will hailed and acceded to by his guilty followers, he had more than once, of late, been opposed and defeated in his desires. He was anxious to regain the influence he had lost, and to rouse up the somewhat damped and diminished energies of his followers to their former standard of ferocity; and it was in the belief that my talent would aid him in accomplishing that desire that he had now introduced me to the secret and guilty conclave. True it was that, in opposing the lecturer, when I first encountered Arthur, I was signally defeated. But

guided by Arthur's advice, I had subsequently obtained vast power over the minds of the discontented. For, following that advice, I discarded the metaphysical subtleties and the constant reference to first principles to which my mind naturally tended; and which are fatal to the demagogue advocate of *violence*, inasmuch as truth will condemn the violence of the anarchical many, more rather than less strongly than that of the unjust or ill-advised few. And my fluency of speech, my retentive memory, stored with historical facts, and conversant to an unusual extent with general knowledge, my audacity of spirit and fervid declamation, speedily made me the favourite and the marvel of the seditious, who predicted great things of their still boyish champion, and were less startled by my advocacy of violence than they would have been by that of an older and seemingly less disinterested orator.

And when Arthur, having briefly but strongly urged the impolicy of any further procrastina-

tion of the revolt which had already been twice postponed, was opposed by a speaker who, while the danger was yet afar off and seen but dimly, had been the loudest in exclaiming for "war to the knife," I arose and addressed the assemblage in the style and with the vehemence of which I now well knew the potency, the compressed lips, the bent brows, and the convulsively clutched hands which brandished the death-giving weapons around me, spoke trumpet-tongued of the triumph of my oratory, and made me wholly and desperately the idol and the tool—the vain and ignorantly elate tool—of treason.

By many a horny palm was my hand grasped that night; and it was with something of that mingled love and admiration which only the power which is exerted in the cause of virtue *should* inspire that the now resolved and utterly obdurate conspirators bade me farewell, as I and Arthur took our departure from our dreary and dilapidated rendezvous. And he, the chief conspirator, poured out his thanks



to me with a warmth and energy unusual even to him; and attributed to my exertion the, now once more, probable crowning of his hopes, and accomplishment of his desires.

For some weeks from that night, I was incessantly engaged in goading the already excited minds of the discontented populace; and if the small still voice of conscience ever spoke to me of former innocence and present guilt, it was speedily silenced by the stronger suggestions of my vanity.

The appointed night at length arrived; and Arthur and I proceeded to the meeting-place of which I have already had occasion to make mention, and where we found the greater number of the conspirators already assembled. We had already armed ourselves, and were arranging the part to be taken by each of the sections into which we were divided, when the name of Mayhew was called, but not answered to, I looked at Arthur, and as our eyes met, we exchanged a glance which both of us but too perfectly understood: we *were* betrayed,

as I had warned him that we should be! How often had I noted the suspicious conduct of that man; and how vainly had I endeavoured to rouse Arthur to similar observation! It was now too late to repair the error. A mere whisper of our suspicion would have carried dismay into the hearts of the majority of our confederates; and thus, without in any degree defeating the treachery of Mayhew, have deprived us of all chance of securing our safety by accomplishing our projected revolt. An instant of reflection enabled me to see and to act upon this view of the case; and I directed the secretary to pass on to another section, saying, at the same time, that Mayhew would doubtless very shortly appear.

In arranging the various parts to be taken in the expected tragedy of real life, some reluctance had been shown by even the boldest of our leaders to one particular destination. Its dangers were, indeed, neither few nor trifling; but, as all depended upon the performance of the act connected with them, I volun-

teered to undertake the enterprise. A shout of applause which shook the old building to its very foundation followed my announcement; and silence being again restored, I directed my followers how to act in certain probable emergencies, and prepared to descend the ladder. Just at that breathless instant, just as we were taking the first step towards an insane attack upon the peace of the most powerful nation in the world, the voice of our black seneschal, who was posted at the lower door, was heard in a wild yell of surprise and warning. I sprang from the ladder, and, being now familiar with the windings of the premises, made my way to his aid. Practised in my earliest youth in the use of the sword, to fell the foremost of his assailants with my cutlass was the work of an instant; but the aid was too tardy—the African had warned us with his last breath, and his last agony. Seconded as my attack had been by my immediate followers with pike-thrust and sabre-cut, the assailants had prudently withdrawn from the


narrow and dark passage into the moon-lit street. And while Arthur and I exchanged a few hasty words, and gave brief directions to the tumultuous and appalled rabble which crowded the passage, the party without had, it seemed, also held consultation; for we were called upon to surrender under threat of being fired upon; and a few dropping shots, of one of which I bear the mark to this hour, gave force and effect to the warning. Guilty I know we were; deeply and bitterly do I know and repent that we were. But we were brave; and we were sure of the fate of traitors even if we submitted. "Advance, pikes, and guard the entrance!" I exclaimed; and I was promptly obeyed. I then communicated my wishes and views to Arthur, and while whispering them to him, heard the whining voice of the false Mayhew exclaim in a tone of impolitic loudness, "The soldiers will soon be at the back of the buildings, and when they drive the rebels out I can identify the leaders." "Forewarned, forearmed," said I to Arthur;

"we must rush out in a body, and then fight man to man, and escape as we each can find opportunity." And again moving to the front, I shouted in that bold and mellow voice of which I had so often in less exciting circumstances marked the thrilling and inspiring power, "FIGHT LIKE MEN, OR DIE LIKE DOGS! FORWARD!"

Our egress was fierce, though it was necessarily disorderly, impeded as we were by the narrowness of the doorway; and sword and pike glanced brightly in the dim light. The peace-officers to whom we were opposed fought well. But their shouting and eager enthusiasm was of small avail when opposed to the cool and wordless determination of men who almost literally fought with halters round their necks. My first aim was at the flambeau carried by the traitor Maybaw; a single cut extinguished that, and a single thrust disqualified him from receiving the reward he had earned by his base betrayal of the men whose crime he had shared, and whose evil inclinations he

had assiduously and successfully endeavoured to stimulate and to increase. I have pledged myself to speak truly, however unfavourable the truth may be to my own character. And I will, therefore, not deny that I felt a perfect rapture as the false traitor sank groaning and overpowered at my feet. But that rapture was the last I was ever to know: that groaning and sinking form has been ever before my eyes; that gushing blood has ever been fresh and hot upon my guilty hand—my entire life since that instant has been a horror and a hell.

But there was as yet small opportunity for reflection. Man after man on both sides sank before sword or shot. But we, the rebels, still had the advantage, and still succeeded in freeing a few of our number at a time from all chance of being apprehended. I had just stricken down the last of a little band which had pertinaciously attacked me and compelled me to battle for every inch of ground over which I retreated, when the rapid but mea-



sured crash of many steps was heard at a small distance on the fast freezing snow. Arthur was at this instant engaged with two assailants, and I had just time to free him of one of them, and thus enable him to despatch the other, when the soldiery appeared in sight, formed, and fired a volley over the heads of the few who still continued the combat. In the confusion that ensued, Arthur and I escaped and took separate routes; he to seek shelter and safety with some obscure people upon whom he could, as he thought, entirely depend, and I to insure my safety by a bolder and more politic course.

## CHAP. XI.

RAPIDITY in grouping and examining all the circumstances, however numerous or conflicting, of my position, and promptitude in resolving upon my course of action consequent upon my judgment of them, have ever been a distinguishing trait of my character.

When I had disentangled myself from the perplexities of the fray, and made frequent and judicious detours, I at length ventured to halt, at once to take breath and to decide upon my future conduct. Though I had run long and rapidly, I had made so many doublings that I was still within hearing of the frequent shots and shouts that rose upon the still and



sharp air of the night. But I rightly judged that the soldiers would have enough to do to overpower their remaining foes and to assist and remove their wounded and slain friends without commencing any very early search after the escaped rebels. It was in a field belonging to a market gardener that I had stopped; and, breaking the ice on a small pond therein, I hastily but carefully freed my hands and face from all signs of the bad business in which I had been engaged, and tying my wounded leg tightly up with a silk handkerchief, made my way into the main thoroughfare. To have hired a coach would have afforded a clue by which I might subsequently be traced. I therefore mounted on the step of a gentleman's carriage which was making for the west end of town at a furious rate; and was thus enabled, in an incredibly short space of time, to make my way to a meeting which I knew was to be held that night for the old purpose of censuring all the

public measures which were adopted, without suggesting any practicable or desirable ones in their stead.

The room, though a very large one, was crowded to excess; and I was enabled to insinuate myself among the multitude without my entrance being observed. That point gained, I felt myself secure. The meeting had assembled at eight in the evening; the conflict I had been engaged in did not commence until nine. To make myself conspicuously busy at the meeting would secure me against being suspected of participating in the conflict. I intimated my wish to approach the platform to a man whom I well knew to be among the most enthusiastic of my admirers; and he took occasion of a pause in the proceedings to reproach the chairman and the assemblage in general with the neglect which allowed an eloquent orator and staunch patriot to be hemmed in among the listening many who would so gladly see him in his

proper place, addressing, delighting, and enlightening them.

The appeal drew all eyes towards me, and it was loudly and unanimously demanded that I should advance to the platform ; where I was accordingly received by the president of the meeting with that *sincere* cordiality which charlatans usually feel for more popular cheats than themselves.

I knew that the proceedings of this meeting were very narrowly and anxiously watched by the authorities, and I felt that it would be politic so to conduct myself as to lead them to suppose that it engrossed my whole attention. I spoke, therefore, at great length, and with greater vehemence and bitterness than I ordinarily displayed ; and I had the satisfaction to perceive that a gentleman who was engaged in taking notes during the whole time that I was speaking, left the room when I ceased. I had succeeded to the full extent of my wishes, for while my hand was yet on

the knocker of the house in which I resided, I was arrested on a charge of having uttered a seditious and dangerous libel ; and lodged, for the night, in the nearest place of security.

On the following morning I was examined and ordered to find bail. For this contingency, too, I was provided ; and a patriotic tailor, who had made a fortune by supplying the government with clothes for the "standing army" he now railed against, and a bookseller who had some months before been deprived of a collectorship of king's taxes, presented themselves as my securities ; and I was set at liberty just as several of the conspirators who had been apprehended on the preceding night were fully committed to take their trial for their offence.

Arthur, on parting with me, made the best of his way to the obscure people upon whom he relied for shelter ; and, as soon as I could do so without observation, I proceeded to see him. That he was desperately wounded I knew, but the alteration which a single night

had wrought in his appearance both shocked and astonished me. For a surgeon he had not dared to send, for fear of a discovery ensuing; and the rude remedies which his host had been able to apply were quite inadequate to preventing his wounds from mortifying. He was, in fact, fast dying when I entered the room; and, ere night-fall, all that remained of that bold, bad, and power-coveting man, was lifeless and pallid clay.

Immense rewards were offered for his apprehension; the shipping in the river, and the residences of numerous suspected persons, my own among the number, were rigidly and frequently searched; of course vainly: and weeks after I had seen his corpse decently interred, the veracious paragraphs of the day announced to the agape multitude that the desperate traitor, Captain Arthur, had been shot by a soldier, seized on his way to an American vessel by a custom-house officer, or apprehended, while sleeping in a hay-loft, by two Bow-street officers and an hostler.

From all thoughts upon his character or his fate, I was speedily diverted by the necessity for preparing for my own approaching trial. Of conviction, it was true, I was full certain; no subtlety of special pleading or eloquence of style could explain away or justify the language which I had openly and deliberately made use of in the presence of intelligent and credible witnesses. But though eloquence could avail me nothing in warding off conviction or mitigating punishment, my vanity demanded its display; and I exerted every faculty of my mind to prepare myself to fight every inch with address and audacity. And though my recent and heinous guilt had already begun to make sad havoc of my mind; and my days and nights were already haunted by apprehensions of detection and by too tardy remorse for the crime I had committed, I so sternly and resolutely addressed myself to my task, that on the day of my trial I wrung even from my very judge a warm admission of my extraordinary ability; though the eulogium

was accompanied by bitter reproaches—so bitter that even *I* cowered before his eye as he made them—of the vile uses to which my ability had been prostituted.

My sentence was imprisonment of a tremendous duration. But my demagogue labours were not even yet at an end. From my prison I addressed myself in a weekly publication, entirely from my own pen, to the discontented in all parts of the kingdom; and from all parts I received letters couched in terms which showed both the enthusiasm I had excited and the exceeding shallowness of their writers' intellects.

It must be a good conscience that can bear long years of solitude without impatience and suffering. Year after year passed on; and though constant study infinitely improved me as a scholar and a writer, my spirit quailed beneath the undivulged and unsuspected load of guilt by which it was oppressed. By degrees I became nervous from want of exercise and continual irritation of mind; and

I not uncommonly started from my feverish and fitful sleep in such an agony of terror that my shrieks rang through the massive cells and roused their guilty tenants to unwelcome consciousness of *their* crimes and their approaching doom.

The term of my imprisonment at length expired; and I was once more cast upon the world. But I was master of more than a hundred pounds, which I had saved from the profits reaped from the early numbers of my publication; and I entered the world from the living tomb in which I had so long been hidden without a fear as to my future subsistence. I knew, that while I had sought honest employment, I had been rejected in some quarters and unjustly treated in others. But I was now a man, and an experienced one, and I knew that a little money, judiciously applied, works marvels, in obtaining the acceptance and the fair treatment of its owner.

Different persons will decide differently as to the judiciousness of my first step—I got.



married. During the whole term of my imprisonment, I had corresponded with a young female, whom I had known from childhood. She was extremely plain in person, ill educated, as pennyless as a German baron, and as upstart as a Spanish Hidalgo. But she had professed an unbounded admiration of my talents, as displayed in my own and other periodical works; and though I had known her so many years, I had not many opportunities of observing her manners closely enough to discover the deformities of her mind. And in the almost maddening solitude of my dungeon, I thought only of her flattering kindness in loving one whom all others shunned. In a word I *could* have loved her if she had possessed a single amiable quality; and I married her only to discover that I had indissolubly bound myself to a pleasant compound of fool, pauper, shrew, and lover of dress in its most *outré* and gaudy absurdities.

## CHAP. XII.

It will not be departing from the most unsparing rigour of self-portraiture, if I affirm that I quitted my dungeon with a sincere desire to have no farther connection with the demagogues or their dupes and tools. The years of my imprisonment had not, as to my reading, been ill spent ; and I too well knew the injustice with which in politics, more than in any other pursuit whatever, justice is denied to even the highest merit and most splendid talents by all except the few who hope something from the politician's influence or gain something by his exertions. The fellow who ostracised Aristides from mere weariness of

hearing him called "the Just," is but a type of the majority of mankind, who are much prone to getting tired of admiring or applauding the same man or the same set of men.

But though I really did look with loathing and aversion upon the bad activity of the life of a political charlatan, I must not say that that loathing and that aversion were all that actuated me in my abandonment of politics ; for the demagogue's occupation was at an end. During the last two years of my imprisonment, even my popular style of writing could not preserve my work from a rapid and rueful decadence ; and when I at length came forth into the busy haunts of men again, the aspect of the world seemed utterly changed. A few years of judicious exertions on the part of the rulers had made employment so rife, and remuneration so good among the employed, that sedition was at a discount, and the speakers and publishers of it out at elbows and in high dudgeon with the government on account of

the calm and consciously—secure contempt with which it resisted all attempts to provoke it into the impolicy of prosecution.

Necessity, therefore, combined with inclination to prevent me from embroiling myself with the authorities ; and I resolved to retire from town for a few weeks with my newly married wife and deliberate upon my future course of life.

I know perfectly well that no one will consider the result of my deliberation a wise one ; but, when all circumstances are taken into consideration, I do not think that it will be found so easy to suggest a better course, as it is to censure that which I took. My talents were purely literary : from the Church and the Bar my character would, as a matter of mere public decency, exclude me ; of the business of an attorney's office I was ignorant ; and for that of the profession of Medicine, I had neither the requisite means, nor the requisite time to qualify myself. While, therefore, I candidly

confess that, under other circumstances, authorship, as a means of subsistence, would have been most imprudently chosen, I think I ought not to be censured for taking up that way of life, as the Hibernian did an extremely bad excuse, "for the want of a better."

But if my choice of a profession was in some degree justifiable, by reference to the circumstances in which I was placed, not so was my choice of the branch of it to which, for a considerable period, I almost entirely devoted myself—*videlicet*, Poetry.

The public taste for poetry was then at nearly as low an ebb as it is at the time at which I am writing. Yet so determinedly and irresistibly was I inclined to its composition, that the most chilling indifference of all the publishers and editors to whom I applied was insufficient to awaken me to a sense of my error.

"I wrote in numbers, *for* the numbers came;"  
and I composed and read poetry so constantly,

that my very conversation at length was almost metrical.

My funds soon became exhausted; for my poetry produced but small receipts, and my wife was as strongly addicted to dress as I was to verse. To make the matter worse, I soon became a father; and my first-born saw the light amid the most painful destitution and embarrassment of his parents.

But I was so completely infatuated, that I attributed my ill success, not to the unpopular form in which I offered my productions to the publishers, but to the distance at which I resided from town. And I accordingly removed to a pleasant suburb of the metropolis, and redoubled my industry in producing poetry, and my pertinacity in pestering the verse-weary publishers to purchase it.

When I did occasionally procure the insertion in any of the papers or magazines of any of my compositions, I must do myself the justice to say, that they were uniformly ad-

mitted to be marked by equal power of expression and originality of thought. But power and originality can but little avail their possessor, if he persist in displaying them in a shape generally and decidedly unpalatable to the public; and the occasional receipt of small sums for the few poems which I succeeded in getting into print, was quite inadequate to the support of myself and my increasing family. Seeing, at length, the impossibility of my creating a new taste in the public, or opposing, save at the price of my own destruction, that which it already possessed and manifested, I resolved to abandon poetry, and turn my attention to some more profitable employment of my acknowledged talents. Just as I made the resolution to do so, I met with an advertisement which strengthened my resolution, and gave me additional hope of being able to carry it profitably into effect. The advertisement in question required a young man of talent to write literary and political papers for

a periodical. I answered it; and, after a few days of no small anxiety, received a blurred, ill-spelled, and most clumsily constructed letter, acknowledging the receipt of mine, and requesting me to call upon the writer, whose card was enclosed.



## CHAP. XIII.

UPON the writer I called accordingly ; and was introduced to a handsome and spacious library, in which sat my future employer.— Little did he deem how critically he was scanned, or, I think, his library-table would have been decked with books or papers, as well as with decanters and glasses !

My card sufficiently announced the errand upon which I had called ; and my gentleman proceeded so quickly to business, that he forgot to request me to be seated. I rectified that error with my customary coolness ; but it gave me as unfavourable a notion of the man's breeding as the contents of his library-table had already given me of his tastes and acquire-

ments. Bred to the law, Mr. Sharp had found, *absit* pun, that the law was not bread to him; and as he desired to have not only bread, but also some small matters of luxury, such as wine, women, and coach-horses, into the bargain, he had, some years previous to my meeting with him, persuaded a client to embark with him in the hazardous speculation of a weekly newspaper, of which "John Sharp, Gent., one," &c., was to be the editor. The speculation succeeded to admiration: the bold eloquence of the political articles, and the genuine taste of the criticisms and essays of the literary department, led the "pensive public" captive; and a fortune to Sharp was the result of the tact with which he persuaded an elderly lady, firstly, to risk her money to establish a paper, and, secondly, to sell her share for less than it had cost her the moment that its success was, humanly speaking, beyond all doubt.

But Sharp had not only made a fortune—he had also acquired celebrity and influence.—True it was that the few men of talent who

had contrived to see him—no easy matter, as he was very shy of personal communications—had been much astonished at the great contrast between his style of speaking and his style of writing. But then your men of genius *are* so odd! When you sit silently by the author of a successful tragedy, anxiously awaiting the moment when he shall thrill you with some poetic burst, 'tis ten to one that he breaks up your high reverie with a demand for “some sweet sauce,” or a “*leetle* bit of the breast!” Several “men of wit and honour about town” have startled me by their cool, methodical, and common-place conversation; and, as all *gens du monde* have experienced the same sort of thing, at their own or their friends' mahogany, no dullard need absolutely betray himself, if he will only speak sparingly. So Sharp had gotten on swimmingly for several years, reaping not only profit, but also praise, from the productions of a man of fine powers, but very debauched habits; who would labour like a horse all day that he might indulge his

insatiable love of drinking at night. But an accident deprived Sharp of this singularly useful ally, who happened to die one fine morning, leaving his disconsolate employer unable even to complete that week's columns, had not an opportune murder and robbery exactly fitted the space which the deceased writer intended to have filled with an essay on the state of the fine arts in England. Hence Mr. Sharp's advertisement, and my visit to him.

"Do you understand music?" was the first question put to me by the *gifted* gentleman into whose presence I was thus thrown.

"No," I replied. "Though passionately fond of it as an auditor, I have not science enough to distinguish between Handel and Rossini."

"No matter," returned this "best possible public instructor:" "you cannot go wrong in criticising music, if you pay attention to our own columns. Those who advertise with us are clever; those who do not, are idiots. You understand?"

"Perfectly; but the arrangement seems to be a not very just one."

"Just! No one's just. Are you? Take my word for it, you'll starve if you are. Do you dance?"

"Never. I think dancing a disgrace to our national character, and the best possible illustration of the elderly adage, which saith that 'one fool makes many.'"

"Exactly. But you will have no objection to speak of the divine—any body who happens to be popular?"

"Humph!" said I. "It appears that principle is to go for nothing; and I have heard that the safest way is to swim with the stream."

Accordingly, I wrote for this singularly wooden person; and never had human being severer labour than that which I now performed. My salary was preposterously low; but then I was to have a handsome share of the profits of the paper, if, after a reasonable

time, it should appear that the paper did not deteriorate under my auspices.

As he made it a *sine qua non* that I should reside near to him, I was obliged to remove from my pleasant and cheap cottage, and take an expensive house in his neighbourhood.—And all my remonstrances against this expensive and inconvenient change he met by reiterated assurances that I should have sufficient employment to produce me a handsome income.

The *employment*, in good truth, he found me, but the income was altogether forgotten, as far as he was concerned. For a time matters went on smoothly enough; but that leprosy of the human heart—avarice, at length led Sharp to diminish the poor and insufficient pittance he had promised to pay me; and weeks passed, after he had received huge bales of manuscript, without my receiving so much cash as would pay for the mere ink with which they were written.

When I at length remonstrated with him on

his monstrous injustice, and refused to proceed any farther with him, he paid me tolerably well for a few weeks, and then suddenly relapsed into his former dishonesty, and persevered in it until he again roused me to angry remonstrance.

For two years we thus went on; I constantly labouring, and he constantly endeavouring to cheat me of my miserable pittance, and frequently succeeding in doing so. If I occasionally succeeded in getting a poem or a prose tale into any of the other periodicals, and my doing so by any accident came to his knowledge, he would literally rave with passion; though they were invariably written in a style, and upon subjects, which would render them quite out of his line of publication. My writing was so profitable to him, that he could not bear that I should cease for a moment from my drudgery. To such a pitch, indeed, did he carry this unreasonableness, that if, on any of the rare occasions of my walking out with my eldest child, he happened to call in

my absence, he would utter the most bitter complaints. In addition to his desire to get the utmost possible amount of work from my pen, he had another reason for disliking my endeavour to connect myself with the periodical press;—he feared that, if I succeeded in doing so, I should summarily put an end to my connection with him.

Let those who shall read my memoirs, while they hate, as they ought and as they inevitably must, the many crimes by which I have injured society and disgraced myself, remember the injustice with which for two years this pettiest of petty tyrants treated me and mine. And, remembering this, let them do me the justice to acknowledge that my perseverance in labouring so long a time and yet seeing the severest privations endured by my family, and sharing them myself, says something for my desire to turn away from evil and to eat my bread in honour and in usefulness.

But I had failed in duty to my parent, and my doom was to be fulfilled. Assuredly a



more efficient torturer than Sharp could not exist. During a long and severe winter, he paid me so ill and so irregularly, frequently keeping me sitting by my fireless hearth till two or three o'clock in the morning, and then taking away work amounting even at his dishonestly low rate of payment to pounds, and leaving me only a few paltry shillings, that my already yielding spirit gave way ; and I began speciously, though falsely, to reason against my own convictions of the superiority of a virtuous life of privation to the luxury which is earned by sin, and poisoned by remorse. Just then my youngest child fell ill. For ten days and nights I sat up with her, writing in the intervals between her agony and her insensibility. At length the period to her suffering arrived. I had just opened the shutters of the window and sat down to my task of hopeless and unrewarded industry, when her last fell struggle commenced ; she was fearfully convulsed for several minutes, gave one loud and piercing shriek—God ! how often has it rung

upon my tortured memory in the midnight dreariness of my solitary penitence!—and then a dark shadow seemed visibly and almost tangibly to spread over her features; and her agonies and my hope were at an end.

Scarcely had I returned from her funeral, and dismissed the undertakers, when all that I had in the world of furniture or apparel was seized for arrears of rent. I know perfectly well what the world says in such cases. “No one should have a house above his means;”—“landlords must have their rent,” and so forth. Without disputing either point, it is sufficiently clear that I lived unwillingly in an expensive neighbourhood; and that, in addition to the actual arrears confessedly due to me, I ought to have received three or four hundred pounds from Sharp. I have in no wise sought to palliate or conceal the guilt of other portions of my life; but at this period of it I feel myself entitled to say that I was in very truth “more sinned against than sinning.”

## CHAP. XIV.

WHILE I cannot refrain from recording my situation at this particular period of my life with a feeling of undisguised bitterness and hatred of him by whom I was oppressed, I must distinctly disavow any intention, as regards that oppression, to accuse any one in society save the one individual who was the immediate cause of my suffering, of aiding in oppressing me or allowing me to be oppressed. In my later and more soberized days, I sincerely disavow accusing *society* because I suffered. I believe that many would have rather aided me in procuring the justice that was due to me, than have seen me driven back to an evil course from undeserved ill-treatment, while pursuing

an at least comparatively virtuous and useful one. But I was an utter stranger to the mighty masses near whom I lived and breathed, and had my ever-suffering being. For two years I had spoken to scarcely any one but my own family and Sharp; by the formerly discontented I had *endeavoured* to be forgotten; and from the good and the wealthy my course of life had shut me, as I deemed, irrevocably out. I was not more friendless than my wife; and I had, therefore, no alternative but to allow my property to be seized, condemned, and sold for a third of its real value.

But though I have long since ceased to blame society or its constitution for the act of one of the most worthless and heartless of its members, it was with no patient or humble spirit that I quitted my stripped and desolated house in the dusk of a stormy and bleak evening, to seek—without a friend in the world, and but a few shillings to bribe the world to tolerance—to seek some other home for my wife, and our surviving and first-born child. I

cursed society, and I hated—deeply, bitterly, hated it; and I felt that but a little more of undeserved suffering was required to cause me to set all its laws and all its interests at naught, and to wage such war with it as should compel it to acknowledge my powers and regret their misapplication. But deep and undeserved as my sufferings had been during two years of hard and ill-remunerated labour, and wild and almost demoniac as was the agony of perplexity and hate with which I stepped friendless and almost utterly destitute into the cheerless and deserted streets, and proceeded to seek some mean and obscure home in which to shelter my family from the inclement elements and our forlorn poverty from the censorious or idle gaze of the world, I was not yet exasperated to the insanity of making poverty the pretext for crime, or of wreaking vengeance upon society because an individual had heaped wrongs upon me.

That night I succeeded in obtaining a small and miserably furnished apartment, and, jaded

as I was by recent watching and embarrassment of mind, it was scarcely daylight on the following morning when I was seated to my writing. During nearly two years I continued in this miserable apartment, incessantly writing and rarely knowing the enjoyment of a sufficient meal. A single passage from an imperfect journal which I then kept will serve to illustrate both my circumstances and my feelings. It runs thus :

“ Twelve months ago, next week, a magazine *accepted* one of the most powerful articles I ever wrote : *it has not yet appeared*. Seven months ago another magazine accepted three articles ; three months ago the editor apologized for their non-insertion, but *not one* of them has yet appeared. Many months ago an editor accepted and printed a paper of mine, and, professing to be highly pleased with that, obtained several others from me. Among them was a poem which I felt to be of a very superior character to the poetry which usually finds its way into the

periodicals. Day after day, for many weeks, and in three cases out of four by his own express appointment, in all weathers, and in a seriously painful and dangerous state of health, I called upon this man without ever succeeding in obtaining an interview of him or getting back my papers or his decision upon them. After walking to and fro to the rigidly calculated extent of eighty miles, I at length learned that he had left the work—and the metropolis also. And this dishonourable and shuffling booby has the impudence to call himself a *gentleman*, God wot, and has actually since been playing the part of second in one of those trumpery transactions called “*affaires of honour!*” About any of the papers which I was thus swindled out of I did not care a *doit*, except the poem. But I was much interested that that should see the light, for I had written it with the fervour of a real and deep feeling, and there were some passages which I thought well calculated to fix public attention, and thus procure for me the employment which I alone

needed in order to lift my family from the degradation in which they are still plunged. Partly as a matter of economy,—for paper was a commodity of serious expense to me—and partly from impatience of the merely mechanical drudgery of copying, I never kept copies of any article. But by a most difficult and painful exertion of memory I rewrote the poem, with some additions and but a few variations. I sent it to a magazine with a brief and polite note, requesting the editor to return my communication should he not deem fit to insert it. From that hour to this I have never received either the article or a line of apology or explanation, although I have repeatedly, and always in the most studiously courteous terms, addressed the editor upon the subject. To what purpose is it that I rise early and go to bed only to dream of new labour, when the effect is only to get a certain number of papers deposited for months or years in a certain number of drawers or desks? Where would be the reputation which the mightiest of our intel-



lectual magnates have achieved, or the delight and instruction which they have diffused, if their productions had been thus suppressed, and their industry and genius thus scornfully treated? Is it that I am *known*, notwithstanding my assumed signature? Be it so. If I and my talents are deemed only fit to be banished, Pariah like, from human ken and human association—if offered truth becomes polluted and scorn-worthy because offered by *me*,—let them at least give me back the scorned offering and not rob me of my own while insulting and excluding me.”

Nor were the cases mentioned in the above extract more than a very small number of those of which I had to complain. And at length the soul which had once been so haughty in its aspirations, and so fierce and dreadless in its resolve, succumbed to perpetual remorse and continued disappointments and sufferings; and I wearied the few who did take some interest in my labours by my perpetual application for employment or aid. I regret this,

but I can scarcely say that any thing of shame or self-reproof is mingled with my regret. Mine was not the self-sought embarrassment which treads upon Turkey carpets, dines daily, drinks wine, and visits the Opera. It was literal and long-enduring hunger that made me appear abject, clamorous, and devoid of that nice sense of the decorous which I once possessed; and when I failed in dignity, or in consideration for the feelings of others, I did so from hearing my child say, "Father, give me bread," and having none to give him, and from seeing my wife pining out her weak soul in a miserable garret, while I vainly endeavoured to earn the means of releasing her.

But if my poverty was unavoidable, equally so was the weariness which the reiterated complaints of it caused to those who were anxious to serve me, and who would have done so to permanently good purpose, if I could have given them time. And it resulted that, as often as I was on the eve of benefitting by the acknowledged ability of my productions, my

enervated and blunted heart destroyed the sympathy which my intellect had called into a momentary existence. At length it became obvious that, to endeavour to procure even a bare existence for my unhappy dependents by literary labour, was a mere and certain wasting of so much time and foolscap as I might devote to the hopeless attempt. My course of life had not been such as to make me fit for any manual labour, even had I not by this time become so broken in constitution by my continual sufferings of mind and body, that it was only by the use of inordinate doses of opium that I could obtain enough sleep to preserve me from insanity. And my conscience, which had slumbered indeed, but never slept, now goaded me so sharply, that my very sleep was a peril; for I babbled ever and anon of the past, and said so much of fierce onslaught and reckless daring, that the suspicions of my wife were aroused; and I more than once detected her in seeking to surprise me into an acknowledgment of the guilt, of which she drew vague

hints from the mental throes which agitated my fevered and unfrequent sleep.

Tongue of sublimest orator, and pen of the most glowing poet, would fail in attempting adequately to describe the days and nights of misery that I endured, when it became indubitable that I had not a hope—not the shadow of a chance, of winning the barest means of existence, far less of achieving the eminence I had dared to hope for, in the only pursuit for which I was qualified. There was nothing so menial, so miserably rewarded, so fatally and infallibly destructive of human health and human life,—there was *nothing*, compatible with honesty, which I would not gladly have been or done. But I *could* do nothing; and, goaded almost to insanity, I passed days and nights in forming projects, which invariably terminated in my feeling a despairing conviction that such was the case.

## CHAP. XV.

FORTUNE, in the fable, complains both bitterly and logically of the injustice with which men attribute all evil occurrences to her influence, while they never ascribe to it any of the happier and more agreeable accidents which happen to them. The truth of the matter is, that, while our selfishness makes us wish for all good and eschew all evil, our vanity imputes all the former to our own merits or our own achievement, and all the latter to some evil influence—which we personify as Fortune—alike beyond our cognizance and our control.

Nor is it in small matters alone that the vile twins, Selfishness and Vanity, thus mislead us. They fool us to the top of our bent on the

greatest and most important subjects—terrene subjects, that is,—of our meditation. Let all history attest it! Look at history; ponder the grave and verbose mystifications with which even wise men have, upon particular points, sought to delude their posterity. Ponder—and smile!

In biography, even more than in more general history, a very important element of causation has been very generally omitted. Deceived by plausible sciolists, people too commonly judge of the man by his fortune, and set down as indolent or incapable all who fail to command success; vehemently lauding, the while, the contrary qualities of those who, in their brief day, have been the minions of fortune, and the “cynosure of all eyes.”—“Everything is possible to perseverance,” cries one quack;—“real ability *must* command success,” cries another;—and the world, believing both without examining the assertion of either, is very deservedly deceived for its indolence and credulity.

With a thousand pitiable instances before their eyes of the utmost ability, employed with the utmost perseverance, obtaining for its possessor only disappointment, poverty, a broken heart, and an untimely grave, the writers of biography boldly persist in attributing the success of their heroes' lives solely to their ability and perseverance. "By this perseverance, \* \* \* \* succeeded in acquiring both wealth and influence, and at length arrived at," &c. &c., says one biographer; and "By sheer dint of his extraordinary genius and untiring industry, he thus raised himself to power and renown, and exalted his native land in the estimation of surrounding nations," cries another. And the world wonders, and gapes, and swallows, and rises from the perusal of the ponderous tome, as ignorant as while the pen of the author was as yet in the wing of its proper goose.

There is no room to doubt that man can do much towards his own aggrandizement; and perseverance — the almost sublime union of

stern determination and untiring effort—is among the chief and the most potent of his means.

*“Gutta lapidem cavat, non VI, sed SÆPE CADENDO.”*

The plastic globule wears the rugged rock  
By frequent falling—not by sudden shock.

But, though genius and perseverance can do much, they cannot—in spite of all the laconic truisms that were ever written—do all. No : your venders of cut and dried praise of the successful—which praise, indiscriminate and general as it is, implies a tacit but bitter and unjust censure of the unsuccessful—leave out of their scheme of causation, when they by accident have any, the grandest and chiefest of the causes of great deeds and great success ; to wit, OPPORTUNITY. *This* has aided all those who have successfully spurned the galling fetters of obscurity and poverty ; and the lack of this has marred the great majority of those who, despite their Promethean agony and resolution, have endured the devouring vulture,



shaken in fierce effort the confining chain, and spurned the massive rock, only to perish at last upon its hard, cold, and invulnerable bosom. This mighty element of success is overlooked by the world in its praise of the triumphant; and they plume themselves upon the mightiness of their efforts, and on the fitness of their genius to the task to which they have devoted its energies; and look with simpering complacency on the shallow philosophy which assures them that they, unaided, have achieved fortune, and that others fail to do so merely from inferiority to them in genius, industry, general conduct, or fitness for their peculiar pursuits.

And yet a brief glance at the course of any of the mighty ones of earth—whether we select him from the slayers of men, glittering in the foppery which throws a bright but unreal halo around the feculent trade of human butchery, or from the noble and tranquil seekers of wisdom, who spend life, and shun its seductive pleasures, in continuous endeavours to benefit

the *οι πολλοι*, whose bad passions they despise, and whose prejudices and infatuation they pity —will serve to show the essential and indispensable influence of OPPORTUNITY; the never named but ever present agent and element in the causation of all human achievement. It is related of one of the bravest and most distinguished marshals of that once seemingly irresistible conqueror, who has now

—— “left a name, at which the world grew pale,  
To point a moral, or adorn a tale,”

that he attracted the attention of his sardonic and danger-spurning leader, by the coolness with which, while writing, he used the sand with which he was covered by a cannon-ball, that bounded close by him, to dry his ink on the paper. Supposing the anecdote to be true, and not to be one of those falsehoods with which gratuitous flattery is offered to those who can no longer be safely trampled down, to what did the marshal owe his first step to fortune? To opportunity *merely*. On that day

of strife and passion, how many thousands of his comrades were there, who subsequently died as they had lived—undistinguished and unrewarded, who would have equalled or even excelled his cool courage or insensibility?—But he *had* the OPPORTUNITY, and they had not!

And that great light to whom thousands owe delight in their hours of ease, and solace in their hours of anguish or of care, and who, I trust, will live to delight and to solace his fellows long after I be dust, and my name forgotten,—if he had not been the denizen of the land of

“Flood, and field, and legendary lore,”

how could his fine genius have called up again to life-like existence the fierce foray, and the rude devotion of clanship, and have painted, as if with a magic pencil, the wild and beautiful scenes of wild deeds, and beautiful contrasts to those deeds? He, too, had OPPORTUNITY, or his fame would have been lost to him, and his splendid creations to the world.

And I, in my last, long, and cheerless struggle for an honourable and a useful existence—I, too, needed only opportunity to have commanded success. A single month of success would have warmed the power which I was conscious of into vigorous life. That success I could never command, or the gifted few who praised what they saw of my ability would have had to own that they had seen but the foot of the giant, and witnessed his transient and unconscious motion, not the agony of his energy and his power.

The reasoning and the anxiety of months terminated in my bidding farewell to all hope of virtuous usefulness. I felt that the mark of Cain was deeply and visibly graven upon my brow, and that nothing, however good or useful in itself, would obtain acceptance from me. And though the *doom* which seemed to be ever active and ever crushing upon my heart could proceed from no earthly power, I viewed society as its inexorable and at once hating and scorning instrument of my punishment; and I

resolved, at length, that if society would not forgive me, it should have more to hate me for.

I *could not* die! It was not the pallid and fearful aspect of death, or the damp cold grave, ever unvisited by the cheering and beauty-producing light; or the foul and humiliating companionship with the obscene and gluttonous worm; it was not by these that I was appalled, or by the sharp pang by which I might pass to them, but the ETERNITY—*that* I did not dare to contemplate. And though my wasted form and cadaverous features might tell of watching and care, and disappointment and long suffering, they could not tell of the insanity which burnt my brain, and seared my heart; while I struggled between my sense of right and my desire to triumph over and avenge myself upon the world I had now learned utterly to hate.

But even when I relinquished my useless endeavour to win my subsistence by literary labour, I resolved to make a new attempt to

procure some, at least, blameless mode of life. My foster-brother had now succeeded to the title and immense estates of his noble father, and I addressed to him a letter, accompanied by copies of all that I had published. I implored him to use his vast influence to obtain me some petty employment. I dispatched my letter and awaited the result with great anxiety but with very little hope. I have elsewhere spoken of my wife as being a weak and vulgar-minded woman; and while I sincerely pitied the real sufferings she had to endure, I could not avoid despising her pusillanimous and *small* temper. Every mole-hill she encountered was to her a mountain; the most trifling inconvenience a woe; the want of showy and gaudy dress an intolerable affliction. So wedded was she to this meanest of vanities—and I doubt not that she still is the same,—that when my child died in the early days of our darkening fate, her maternal grief first found utterance in an expression of despair of being able to buy “decent mourning.” Thrones might have

tottered, nations been annihilated—a moderate supply of lace and ribands would have consoled her. In fiction, the unfortunate are usually blessed with wives more heroic than themselves ; my wife's sole mode of consolation was to sneer at the unprofitable nature of labours with which she could not sympathize, and to interrupt my most pressing or perplexed moments with accounts, garnished with expressions of aching envy, of the dress, from shoe-tie to bonnet-bow, of every dressy and well-fed fool in our neighbourhood.

And in the interval between my sending the letter to my noble foster-brother and receiving his answer, her entire waking hours were spent in idle chattering of her anticipations of the time when, from my obtaining some more profitable employment, she could “ make a respectable appearance ;” which I believe nothing less than five hundred a year of pin-money would have enabled her to do to her satisfaction.

The reply at length arrived, franked, sealed

with the Earl's coat of arms written on paper so highly glazed that I could scarcely look upon it, and so highly scented that I had a head-ache for hours after I opened it. Its contents were brief and decisive. The Earl perfectly well remembered both me and my family, regretted my situation, was without influence, and, from various causes, without superfluous money.

And my mother had saved this personage's life at the sacrifice of her own health! I turned giddy as I read the heartless letter; and a broiling brain-fever relieved me for a fortnight of all the cares and anxieties of my desolate condition.

The first news I heard, when I at length recovered from my all but fatal illness, was that the Earl, on the very day after I received his flippant and hope-destroying letter, which was dated from Newmarket, had lost upwards of ten thousand pounds upon a race of which every booby of his acquaintance had foreseen and foretold the result. I neither rejoiced nor grieved. I could think of nothing but the



destitute state of which I was restored to a consciousness. My last hope had now departed from me, and the long-dreaded hour had arrived when I must again plunge into crime. My resolution was soon formed, and I proceeded to act upon it with a firmness and activity which would have been honourable to the highest degree if displayed in any of those honourable pursuits from which I was for ever shut out.

## CHAP. XVI.

My reading with my first employer had given me a taste for medical studies, which I had subsequently indulged as far as I could find opportunity. And knowing how easily the sufferers from ill health are induced to believe him who promises boldly and largely, I determined to declare myself in possession of the means of curing the most fatal disorders; confidence, secrecy, and, of course, liberal fees, being all that I required of my patients. But even to be dishonest requires some capital, or at the least some credit; and after reflecting upon a variety of means of getting the necessary funds for that first step which, in all undertakings, is so indispensable and so

difficult, I resolved to apply to a Jew, for whom I had conducted a rather extensive correspondence with an Italian merchant. My Israelitish acquaintance was, like most of his tribe, exceedingly wealthy. Whether his people in the mass deserve the reproach of being self-seekers and extortioners beyond the custom of dealers and chapmen in general, I have not the means of knowing; but I know enough of mankind to *believe*, that this, like many other assertions in popular acceptance, is false. At all events, De Meilheim, to whom I applied, had a heart and a brain as well as a strong box and breeches-pockets; and I did not apply to him in vain.

It was in the dusk of the evening that I waited upon him; having previously sent him a letter detailing my views and intentions, but representing that I *had* made the grand discovery to which I was about to pretend. If I had not well known the extensive dealings and vast wealth of the man, I should have drawn but a hopeless conclusion from the

shabby and ruinous appearance of the exterior of his house; which was decidedly the meanest-looking of all those that were situated in his obscure street. But I knocked cheerfully and hopefully at the door, and having been scrutinized with all due care and suspicion by a hard-featured Jewess, was admitted to the passage, which said as little for the wealth of De Meilheim as the exterior of the house did. I waited here but a few minutes, when I was ushered into the *sanctum sanctorum* of my acquaintance; who was reclining upon a sofa which might have defied the criticism of a Sybarite, and playing with a glad and benevolent air with his three singularly beautiful children. The Eastern cast of their and his features, his long and cherished beard, his gaberdine and Turkish pipe, and the rich elegance of the furniture and decorations of the room in which he took his ease, caused me for a few moments to forget the errand I had called upon, and to fancy myself transported suddenly to some

foreign and far land. But matters pecuniary; be we borrowers or lenders, will not long be forgotten in any scene or at any time, and I speedily recovered my self-possession and took the seat to which he courteously and kindly motioned me. A short conversation settled my business; and so well did I employ my eloquence and knowledge of mankind that I departed from De Meilheim's house the master of a hundred pounds in cash, with trinkets and trumpery nominally valued at one hundred more, and which were at least worth a fourth of that sum. For this fortune, as it really seemed to me, I had left my acceptances for four hundred pounds. But I did not grudge the sum I was to pay for an accommodation by which he risked much, and I was determined to gain more. Hitherto I have only named incidentally my surviving child. But upon that fairy and fair creature my whole love and my whole hope were set. *He was my world*; his smile my solace in disappointment, his pure and sincere caresses

my sole reward in years of disappointment and suffering. And now that I had for ever bidden farewell to virtue, now that I was about to make my whole life a lie and an extortion, and to shock human suffering by promising relief beyond the power of humanity to afford, I resolved to sacrifice my delight to his virtue ; and to separate him from the doomed parent who had forfeited alike the right and the power to guide his steps aright, and to imbue his heart with right feelings and his intellect with truth and with holy and high aspirations.

And accordingly I lost no time in dispatching him and his mother to Bath, where I intended them temporarily to reside until my success—which I knew to be certain—should enable me to provide them with a permanent and pleasant residence. That parting was terrible. My boy clung to me, and sobbed as though his pure young heart would break, and the forbidding coldness of eye and tone which I had studiously, and in mercy to both him and myself, assumed, and for some time succeeded

in maintaining, gradually gave way before his passionate love ; the strong stern soul of the callous and evil man was melted, and the tears gushed hot and heavy from the eyes of the guilty father, and bedewed the cheeks of the unconscious and innocent child. From my wife I parted as I should have parted from a fellow passenger in a mail-coach. I did not hate her, or even dislike her : I simply despised her. She was strictly virtuous, and remarkably temperate : she had but one fault,—that, namely, of being a fool ; and but one misfortune, that of having married a man whom she could neither cheat nor scold into blind compliance with insatiable absurdity.

## CHAP. XVII.

I LOST no time, after the departure of my wife and child, in providing myself with handsomely furnished lodgings at the west end of town. My Israelitish friend was my referee, and I assumed the name of Douglas D'Arcy.

Let it not be supposed that my change of name was an unnecessary or even an unimportant step towards the success I was determined to obtain. A foreign name and a dark complexion—mine, unfortunately, was very fair—are as good as five hundred a year to a *Chevalier d'Industrie* who has wit enough to turn them to proper account. Nay, even in the legalized kinds of extortion which we mildly designate by the term “trade,” it makes a



horse and gig and suburban-box difference to a trader whether his name be a French or an English one. If any unhappy person has the surname of Street, let him Gallicize it to *De la Rue* ; he shall sell many ribands and much lace, to the patriotic fair of England, by the change. Has any tailor made so many more suits of dandies' apparel than he has been able to touch penny for, that he has been compelled to reside in Surrey, and does he still write himself Mr. White? Let him try the name of Monsieur Le Blanc, and he shall speedily wax wealthy.

To this piece of policy, trifling as it may seem, I was not long in finding myself greatly indebted. I circulated an elegantly written prospectus, in Italian, French, German, and English, widely among the wealthier classes ; who were at once the most likely to produce *les maladies imaginaires*, and the best able to pay for the indulgence of their fancies. And even now that I had determined to let nothing stop me in my pursuit of riches, I wished rather

to meet with imaginary than real ailments ; for though I was determined, *coute qu'il coute*, to practise boldly upon all that should come across me, I would fain have given health, by the knowledge which I really did possess, to the enervated victims of indulgence and sloth, rather than have slain those whose maladies were beyond my understanding, but for which I could not decline to act without at once belying my whole profession and marring my whole scheme.

During the first few weeks of my new career I did not more than cover my expenses, which, as I kept my cabriolet and in all other respects, lived handsomely, were necessarily very great. Chance at length threw a crowning triumph in my way. Late one night I had already entered my dressing-room, and was just lingering over the diablerie of a German romance, a kind of reading by which I have become more and more fascinated, as my own life has become more guilty and more romance-like, when peal on peal was played on the knocker, and the servant

brought me up a card with a message requiring my immediate attendance on one of the wealthiest untitled ladies in the kingdom.

She, like myself, was born among the undistinguished herd, and passed the prime years of her life in destitution and misery. But by successive steps she had raised herself above her native state and station, and attracted the notice of an octogenarian, the Cræsus of his time and country, who married her, and, at his death, disinherited, in her favour, the whole of his grandchildren, who were scarcely her juniors. Years had passed by since his death, and she was now the wife of a man fully young enough to be her son, whom she treated, as she did every animated being within her sphere of influence, with the most insolent and dictatorial haughtiness. Though she had escaped from the miseries of her original condition, she had not escaped from its coarseness and vulgarity; and, being utterly destitute of education, she added habitual inebriety to her many other amiable qualities. In one of her

fits of ignorant and despotic passion she had now dismissed her physician; and my name having been mentioned to her by some of the numerous toadies who partook her ridiculously costly feasts, envied her enormous wealth, and ridiculed her upstart vulgarity, she had sent for me to prescribe for her.

Hastily donning my attire, and jumping into a hack chariot, I was soon at the door, and was admitted by half-a-dozen laced and powdered lackeys, whose broad shoulders and stalwart bodies would have admirably qualified them for the more fitting and useful employment of driving dray-horses and lifting butts. Passing through the hall, which was crowded with these gaudy minions, I was shown into a handsome waiting-room until the lady's page came to introduce me to her presence. He at length did so; and, passing up a magnificent marble staircase, of which the ballusters were most curiously wrought and gilded steel, and the pannels elaborate and splendid paintings, I speedily reached the boudoir in which my pa-

tient awaited my arrival. Plate glass abounded around this splendid room, every article of its furniture that would bear it was curiously and expensively inlaid with mother-o'-pearl or the precious metals, and the rich carpet rose above my shoe as I trod upon its soft and beautiful surface. The very fender and fire-furniture were of chased silver, and the miniatures of herself, her present and her former husband, which decorated one side of a cabinet of rare filagree work, were surrounded by massive frames of gold thickly studded with diamonds and other costly gems.

All this I took in at a swift and imperceptible glance. Douglas D'Arcy was not the man to allow mortal to witness his surprise; he had composed eye, and features, and heart, —save in his hours of unespied solitude—so that none could read his thought or anticipate his design.

With a cold and thoughtful air I bowed to the lady, and to a small thin care-worn looking gentleman who stood beside her luxurious

couch. She was the largest and most vulgar-looking woman I ever saw ; twenty stone in one scale would have kicked the beam had she taken her place in the other. Her dark hair was banded across her high but ill-formed forehead ; her eyes were tear-full and maudlin ; and her face, once eminently handsome *of its kind*, of which I am no admirer—viz. the bold and the vast—was bloated and of a literally fiery redness. She sat panting and wheezing, and was unable to invite my approach otherwise than by signs. Once or twice, indeed, she attempted to speak ; but symptoms of approaching suffocation compelled her to desist. Doctors proverbially disagree ; but here there was no room for mistake or disagreement. The apartment was gorgeous, the easy chair was magnificent, the patient was attired with outrageous richness, and her huge red hands were loaded with rings ; but my acute olfactories detected the strong scent of brandy nevertheless.

Though I had occasionally used ordinary remedies alone, and though, in all cases, I had

used them as well as my own peculiar nostrum, all my power was supposed, as I wished it to be, to lie in my use of the latter. And the small, thin, miserable-looking gentleman, who stood beside the couch of the plethoric patroneſs of ſtrong waters, lifted up his care-full eyes to mine, and, in a ſmall treble tone of admirably affected grief, inquired if my peculiar and famous remedy might not afford his dear lady ſome ſpeedy relief. I have ſaid that our eyes met; and, in ſo ſaying, I have virtually ſaid that the ſecret of his thought was mine: for human eye never fully and fairly bore my gaze without betraying the ſecret its expreſſion would fain have concealed. My famous remedy! Shrewd dog! It would, indeed, have afforded her ſome ſpeedy relief: ſhe would have ſlept ſoundly enough that night. My game was not to ſlay ſave in ignorance, or from being *compelled* by circumſtances to uſe “my famous remedy” in caſes for which it was unfit. And, to ſay truth, I felt ſomething like a miſchievous ſatisfaction

in being able to continue to the hen-pecked would-be assassin the life of her whom he had basely married for her wealth, in despite of their disparity of age, and her known bad qualities of head and heart. It was clear that the woman was fast tending to apoplexy from natural plethora, increased and kindled into inflammation by the perpetual deglutition of brandy; and I treated her accordingly. All that night I stayed by her side; and on the following morning left her cool, perfectly restored to sense and speech, and in a fair way, between venesection, sudorifics, and so forth, to rise in the course of a few days with a much less florid countenance, and with some four or five stone of weight less for her coach-horses to drag.

I visited my patient again and again, until I had restored her to the utmost healthiness of frame and value of life, compatible with her luxurious way of living and lack of wholesome exercise. Except the party politician, there is no one upon whom the heartless among the



wealthy will so profusely shower their golden favours as upon their medical men. My patient had *felt* her peril; and even her coarse mind, scarcely capable of taking in the more important and really awful considerations connected with death, had shrunk aghast at the near prospect of "the cramp-irons and the angel." On the morning that I pronounced my farther attendance to be quite unnecessary, she presented me with a cheque for five hundred pounds, and an extremely beautiful and costly ring. Nor did my benefit from curing her end even here. In spite of her coarseness and vulgarity, her enormous wealth caused her to be admitted into first-rate society; and her enthusiastic mention of my skill, backed and attested as it was by her own altered and improved condition and appearance, procured me, ere the season expired, a literal crowd of wealthy patients. The golden shower of *Danæ* seemed realized: I had scarcely time to eat, drink, dress, or sleep, so perpetually were my

knocker assailed by new patients, and my wheels rolling towards the domiciles of old ones.

My gains were so enormous, that I was literally astonished at the extent of my own success. My first profits I had devoted to purchasing and furnishing a small but very delightful cottage, which I presented to my wife. I now took a mansion in the best part of town, and furnished it in the most costly and elegant manner.

I think that nothing is more likely to inspire a man with an excessive desire for the more elegant and *recherché* luxuries of living, than his having been for years steeped to the very lips in privation and squalidness. It is said that "The Pleasures of Human Life" were written while the author was starving in a debtor's gaol; and that "The Miseries of Human Life" were composed amid all the luxuries that a splendid private fortune, and a rich fellowship of one of the richest of our colleges, could command; and I never read a book which dilates very glowingly

upon super silver salvers, impossibly magnificent epergnes, and ultra Apician delicacy of vianda, without suspecting and pitying the poverty of the writer. I know that in ~~my~~ days of misery and obscurity, my imagination ran riot in gorgeousness and luxury; and, while literally starving with absolute hunger, I have held imaginary dialogues with ideal friends, over fancy-conjured banquets. And now that wealth poured daily in upon me from all quarters, I vied with princes in luxury, and with the sycophants of princes in the exact delicacy of my fancy. Brummell could not find a fault in my apparel; my library would have satisfied Heyne or Bentley; and the most fastidious flatterer at fashionable parties would have pronounced my furniture and equipage correct *à merveille*. And my profuse expenditure was so far from plunging me into embarrassment, that it soon doubled my celebrity, and trebled my income. My ~~jew~~ was long since paid off; my bills were regularly examined and discharged once a week; and I saved a fortune while

living at a rate which would have dissipated an unproductive one.

But, amidst all this, the sublime story of *Vathek* barely shadows forth the fierce and wearing agony which I constantly endured; the halls of Eblis had nothing more terrible than was ever living and ever gnawing within my bosom. *Blood*—hot, unatoned blood—was ever upon my hand and before my eyes;—and little thought the beautiful and graceful women, at whose morning parties—my *nights* were always devoted to solitude—I was now a frequent and welcome visitor, that the gloom upon which they ineffectually rallied me was the remorse of a murderer—that the hand which led them so tenderly and gallantly to their carriages had struck the stroke of the rebel and the assassin in the midnight fray!

My perpetual care, and the excessive fatigue of my way of life, increased my nervousness to so horrible an extent, that I at length was compelled to hire a deaf and dumb youth for my valet, and to have him constantly to sleep

in an anti-room of my chamber, lest the undivulged and fatal secret should be published in my sleeping madness, and I be dragged from my luxurious shelter, to be strangled like a dog before a yelling and execrating rabble. Agony—oh! agony of irretrievably lost innocence, of inexpressible guilt!—which has no safety on earth save in the secrecy which a breath, a doubt, a word, the merest accident, may destroy! And the world envied me, and fawned upon me; and I had triumphed! And *this*—this never-ceasing torture—was the trophy and the token of my victory!

## CHAP. XVIII.

THOUGH my remorse goaded me always, it was only in the night-hours of my solitude that I allowed it to subdue and prostrate my energies. In the world, and to the world, I seemed melancholy indeed; but mine seemed the melancholy of a stern, soured, and studious temper, not that of conscious and hopeless guilt.

And my fame travelled far and wide; and my "regular" brethren of the gold cane and solemn countenance waxed envious of my success; and quack, charlatan, and impostor, were among the mildest terms which they coupled with my assumed name. But their enmity was impotent; for their very efforts to injure me served but to make that name more

generally talked of; and notoriety is the very soul and life of successful charlatanism.

A long, lean, care-worn man accosted me one morning, as I was stepping into my carriage; and, giving me a slip of paper, containing his name and address, begged that I would call on his wife, whom he represented to be in a dreadful state of health. I promised compliance with his request; and, in the course of my drive, made my promise good. From the appearance of the man, I judged him to be one of the poorest of the working classes, struggling to maintain a decent appearance by dint of undergoing severe privations in those particulars which could not be espied by unpeccable curiosity. His house, however, was decently furnished, and wore even a respectable exterior appearance; and the room in which I was introduced to my patient had all the appliances of comfort, without any of those beggarly make-shifts which I had often seen in the residences of more pretending persons. The door happened to be opened as I

drove up to it; and, anticipating the extremity of suffering, from the description I had received, I did not allow my footman to knock, but requested the woman whom I saw at the door to show me to the patient. There was something very like an inclination to laugh in the countenance of the woman; but she very civilly showed me up the first flight of stairs, and, giving a slight push to a half-opened door, said, "Mrs. Edwards, here is a gentleman wishes to speak to you." The lady presented herself accordingly; and, in the smallest voice she could use, said, "Walk in, sir, pray." I did so, and saw a picture—a perfect picture of fine, rude, but over-fed, health. I *really* thought that there was some mistake; and I told her, giving her the slip of paper I had received, that I had called to see a person who was, as I understood, in an extremely bad state of health.

"Ah, sir!" said she, "I am the most deceitfullest cretur as lives. My nerves are so bad, I'm as weak as a child a month old."



"Deceitful enough," thought I; and I proceeded to question her minutely as to her symptoms. She was nervous, and flatulent, and weak, and melancholy, and Heaven knows what beside; but I contrived to elicit from her that that very morning she had had, firstly, some tea and a buttered roll before she was out of bed; secondly, a glass of Hollands and a biscuit; and, thirdly, some stewed oysters and a glass of brandy; and that she was about to dine off a leg of mutton, with a batter pudding baked under it. I farther learned from her, that she had not walked fifty yards from her own door during upwards of two years; and that all the little labour connected with her housekeeping was done by her children, the eldest only twelve years of age, occasionally assisted by a char-woman. And there she sat, with the colour of a milk-maid, the strength of a pugilist, and at least half a hundred weight of superfluous fat upon her lazy bones, whining and drawling out her lying affectations, and turning up her eyes like another Mawworm.

When I at length got her to the end of her abominable simulations, I meditated, for a few moments, whether I should dose her into a dread of the doctor for her life to come. But I reflected that my prescriptions would cost the unhappy man, who had the infliction of being deceived and half starved by this inordinate glutton and lazy hypocrite, a sum which he could ill spare. I rose, therefore, and assured her that her case was quite beyond my skill ; and prepared to leave the room. But she was not minded that I should get off so easily ; and, placing herself between me and the door, she begged me to advise her what she ought to eat. I made the reply which I have a thousand times since seen attributed to one of my regular brethren :

“ You must not eat the bellows, ma'am, for they are too windy, nor the fire-irons, for they are too hard ; but you may devour anything else you can bolt, for you have the appetite of a peacock, and the digestion of an ostrich.— You have but one disease—laziness and glut-

tony; and there is but one cure for you—starvation and the workhouse.”

My rebuke was doubly efficient, from the circumstance of its being overheard by certain of the softer sex, who had contrived to make one key-hole sufficient to accommodate and inform three ears; and a loud laugh of mingled satisfaction and derision added to the dismay and rage of my patient. And the burst of abuse that announced her recovery of the faculty of speech! Her rage rang in my ears even after I had reached and passed the street-door; and it did not *all* fall upon an indifferent ear. “*He* a doctor!” the fury exclaimed: “he’s no more a doctor than I am, for all his gold rings, and his chains, and his trinkum-trankums! He’s a murderer, as they say he is; that’s what he is!”

Though she would probably have called an angel the same, or a worse name, her words smote my heart; and, when I got into my carriage, I ordered “home;” for I was too much overcome to pay any more visits that morning.

Never tell me of the indolence or the selfishness of the wealthy. The lowest have all the vices and all the follies of the highest; the difference is neither in kind nor in degree, but only in mode of manifestation. This sensual and slothful creature could not have been more sensual or more slothful had she been a countess or the wife of a millionaire. She would have indulged her propensities differently and at greater expense, but she would not have been even so guilty as in her actual circumstances she was; for she starved and beggared her family, which the possession of fortune would have obviated her doing.

I saw her once more.

Some weeks after the occurrence above related, I received a letter written in the most pure and eloquent French, but on extremely coarse paper, and with ink which showed that the writing materials of the writer were in no very high state of preservation. The letter implored me to visit the writer's only child, whom it stated to be fast dying; and delicately,

though plainly, it forewarned me that it was not then in the writer's power to pay my fee, but that it infallibly should be paid whenever a brighter day should dawn upon him.

Let me do myself justice. Irritated though I had been with society, and at once hating and scorning as I did the *race* man, human being never yet vainly asked me for the aid I had the power to extend. I received the letter just after I had dined and retired to my study. My fire burned clearly and fierce, my lamp was already lighted, and my favourite Plato spread open before me. The wind howled and groaned among the yellowish evergreens in the little garden into which my study windows opened; all within was luxurious comfort; all without was raw, bleak, comfortless, and repulsive. The rain, too, fell in torrents, and the night was altogether such that, excepting in a case of the utmost possible emergency, I should have blushed to expose my coachman, or even my horses, to its inclemency.

But a human being demanded my mercy ; the young life dearer to him than his own might be extinguished ere the morning dawned ; and I lost not a moment in wrapping my cloak around me and hastening to the nearest coach-stand. Half-an-hour of jolting and jumbling, in one of those vile vehicles which disgrace the city which they ply in, brought me to the street I was bound to, and the coachman pulled up and demanded to what number I wished to be driven. Looking at the letter to tell him, it struck me that I had been there before ; and when the coach again stopped and a preposterous thundering at the knocker had caused the door to be opened, I recognized in an instant the woman who had formerly ushered me into the presence of my lazy and fat patient, Mrs. Edwards.

Lighted up by this person, I ascended to the top of the house, and as I reached it heard a voice of loudness and passion as unusual as it was unbecoming to a scene of sickness and suffering. And when I stepped upon the top-

most landing-place, I was aware of the presence and identity of no smaller a personage than Mrs. Edwards herself, who was vociferating her demands for "five weeks' rent," to the evident annoyance of an elegant-looking though shabbily attired and obviously distressed young man, as well as to that of her own submissive husband; who ventured at intervals to beg, rather than to demand, her milder conduct. The husband recognized me as soon as I came within his view, and, touching his hat respectfully, made the best of his way down stairs; apparently no little rejoiced that my advent had released him from the ineffectual attempt at peace-making, which his better nature impelled him to make, while his meekness rendered it irksome and painful. Not so my former patient. My presence was the signal for an increase of her fluent abuse of her unfortunate lodger; and it was clear that my only chance of performing the merciful duty for which I had left my home lay in my taking summary measures for dismissing her. She

held the room-door nearly half open, disclosing the wretchedly ill-furnished hovel, rendered the more cheerless in its aspect by the grate being entirely fireless, and by the room itself having no other light than that which glanced partially into it from the candle which the virago held in her well-polished brass candlestick. Calmly taking this out of her hand, I shut the door quite coolly in her face, and stepped forward into the room. She opened the door again, her features inflamed and swollen with rage, and demanded her candle.

"When *I* have done with it," said I, and, looking her full in her eyes with that stern calm glare which guilt or baseness can never encounter but to cower before it, I added—"walk you down stairs; and if you again venture to disturb that dying child, you shall go to the watchhouse to-night and to Newgate to-morrow morning." She retired, uttering curses deep but not loud; and I then turned my attention to the wretched occupants of the truly wretched apartment.



I have said that the grate was fireless. The furniture of the room was of the scantiest and most beggarly description, and the walls, door, and window, had so many crannies that the wind scarcely allowed the candle to remain lighted. And yet amid all this misery there was very conspicuous "the elegance of the poor"—cleanliness; and the apparel, worn and shabby as it was, of both the parents and the child itself, whom I had come to visit, showed plainly enough that poverty had not driven the former to the self-abandonment and degradation of soul which degradation in circumstances but too frequently—nay, almost universally—produces.

After apologizing for his application to me, the father detailed the symptoms which his child had manifested; and both his own and his wife's countenance told me more plainly, and far more convincingly, than any words could have told, that upon the life of that afflicted child their hearts hung with an anxiety and devotion greater, rather than less, for the misery in which they were plunged. I rose

from my seat and approached the bed on which, though still dressed, the little sufferer was reclining; and a glance at her features confirmed what her father's description had led me to suspect. Small wonder was it that "the only medical man to whom they had ventured to apply, had said that he could give her no medicine which would be of service to her complaint." And yet it was a simple one, and one which a weakly man could easily cure—it was *Famine!* A more lovely child than she had been, and subsequently was, I never beheld. The fair hair and complexion of her mother contrasted singularly and beautifully with the large dark earnest eyes of her father; and her hands and arms were the very perfection of feminine symmetry. But she was famished; literally pining away hour by hour and inch by inch with mere inanition; though the fond and faithful parents forebore from their scanty and unfrequent meals, that she might suffer less.

The story of the father was short. He was an artist, poor, friendless, unable to obtain

employment, yet conscious of the powers he had not the opportunity to manifest. If artist had been changed for author, it would have been the tale of my own days of misery and despair! From the moment he concluded the information I requested, he was safe: I vowed a vow, not audibly indeed, but firmly and deeply—and I kept it.

I did not leave them until a cheerful fire blazed in the lately cheerless grate, nor until his lately foodless cupboard was well stocked with every necessary, and his hard bed heaped with blankets. After giving him sufficient money to make him independent of his landlady, and supply any wants he could know for that time, I bade him farewell; promising to return on the following day.

While I had been thus engaged, the weather had suddenly and completely changed. The rain had entirely ceased to fall, and the wind's roaring fury had lulled into a low and not unpleasant though melancholy moaning. Having a rooted aversion to street-hired vehicles, I

took advantage of this change of weather to pay and discharge the coachman ; and, drawing my cloak tightly round me, walked slowly and thoughtfully down the street.

Here, thought I, is a man of fine feelings, probably of great professional talents, and certainly firm in his morals ; yet he starves, pines, sees his only child pining and starving before him. I, who once was like him, have but to wish for luxury to have it, though I win it by charlatanism and imposture ; while he, the enduring and the noble-minded, is only saved from destruction by the interference of one who is an impostor and has been a murderer ! Ah ! but if in *time* there is this seeming inequality, this apparent injustice in the distribution of our lots, *eternity* will equalize the unequal, right the wrong, reward the enduring in virtue, and punish the temporarily triumphant wicked !

And the thought that my triumph was *but* temporary stung me into an unconscious quickening of my pace, and my cloak, which I

loosened in my nervous start, flew open. Before I could recover and replace it, a man who had been walking by my side for some minutes, though I had been too much absorbed in thought to take any particular notice of him, stopped as I stopped, and looked steadily and fixedly in my face. Even the enervating power of remorse has not deprived me of that merely animal courage which the world rates so highly, and which I think, excepting in some few and rarely occurring cases, the paltriest and least useful of human qualities. And though the hour of the night, the action of the man, and the deserted stillness of the streets, gave me abundant cause to suspect that he intended violence, it was with the most unshaken calmness of voice and heart that I said, as I again drew my cloak around me — “Probably you will know me, should we meet again.” “Perhaps I shall,” said the fellow, whom by this time I perceived to be a dangerous-looking person ; and, without saying another word, he turned suddenly away. As I walked the remainder of

the way home, I reflected on this circumstance; and, likely as it was to occur to any peripatetic person in London streets and at so late an hour, I could not rid my mind of the fear that this brief rencontre was ominous of coming evil. Even the voice of the man sounded like one I had heard either in other days or in the wild imaginings of my guilty dreams.

And this fear was increased tenfold when, as I knocked at my door, the same fellow met my eye at the corner of the street. His hat was slouched, and he was evidently watching me, yet anxious to escape from being seen himself. For a moment I meditated approaching him and demanding his business. But on reflection I thought it was most probable that he was some "minion of the moon" who had greatly desired to rob me; and I deemed it wiser to let well alone, and not provoke an encounter which probably only accident had prevented me from being compelled to.

And accordingly I entered as soon as the door was opened: and in a few minutes was

too busily engaged in study to reck aught of the rencontre, or of the evil of which it might be the omen and the prelude.

But it *was* ominous of evil. A new curse awaited me. *I!* I could not even do good without reaping evil; I could not pity the sufferings and relieve the necessities of one human being, without drawing down upon myself the persecutions of another. And such persecutions! They continue still, they wear me by day, and madden me by night; fiend! monster! will they never end? will your extortions never cease? and shall I never free myself from your tremendous power, from your devilish and unsparing tyranny?

Never in this world shall I cease to writhe and tremble under the effects of that brief but most fatal rencontre. But DEATH, thy already uplifted arm will at once smite the victim and baffle the torturer; thou wilt deliver me *from* him;—alas! *to* what?

## CHAP. XIX.

On the following morning, after I had paid my indispensable visits, I again visited the abode of the poor artist; and I felt one of the few sensations of pure and perfect delight which my life has afforded me as I noted the marked improvement which was already visible in the countenances of my little patient and her parents.

I now made more detailed inquiries of the father than I could properly make on the preceding night; and I carefully and critically examined some very fine though unfinished paintings, which bore ample and indubitable testimony to his possession of a genius which



only required patronage to a moderate extent to develop itself and to secure fortune to its possessor. And the longer I conversed with this gifted and unfortunate man the more did I discover to admire both in his intellect and in his moral principles. As to his moral character I had already satisfied myself by inquiries made through a confidential servant; and I determined that this fine spirit should not any longer wither in a galling obscurity, or have to fly to crime should his nature at length succumb to his undeserved sufferings. I enabled him to remove immediately into respectable lodgings, and gave him an order for an elaborate and expensive painting of the assassination of Dentatus. He completed it in a style which satisfied me of the correctness with which I had judged him to require only fair play in order to his vindicating his genius and amending his fortune; and of the many thousands of pounds which within a few years I have expended upon works of art, the sum I paid him

for this noble, though by no means faultless, performance, purchased me at once the greatest and the most enduring satisfaction.

Thank Heaven! guilty and wretched as I am, I shall not have lived wholly in vain, or entirely to the commission of evil deeds. My recommendation served my gifted and enthusiastic *protégé* even more effectually than my personal aid. Employment soon reached him to an extent beyond the most sanguine expectations of the day-dreams of his suffering and unfriended youth; and he is now not only easy in his worldly circumstances, but steadily and rapidly advancing in the favour of his contemporaries, and laying the foundation of a durable and deserved fame.

Haply, even he—invariably and assiduously grateful as I have ever found and still continue to find him—haply, even he, when he shall read these pages, will abhor the memory of the rebel and murderer, even while he remembers with gratitude the kindness and the zeal of the friend. But let him not forget

that, though I failed to endure to the end, so *he* might have failed, if he had but been left to struggle to the end without one mitigation of his wretchedness, and without one opportunity of struggling to rise above it. Nor let him forget that, in the worst days of his adversity, and at the lowest ebb of both his fortunes and his hopes, he had ever an enduring, and a cherishing, and an all-trusting, and all-admiring, and sympathizing friend in his *wife*; while mine was my perpetual torment—cold, ignorant, unsympathizing, and unloving; a mere animated incubus, pressing upon my strength, and impeding, while she could not understand, my efforts.

For several days after I had enabled my young artist to start in the career of honour and success, which he has since so constantly and so profitably continued, nothing occurred to destroy the transient calm which the good I had done to his heart shed upon my own; except that I learned that my boy had been slightly indisposed, and was still but slowly

recovering. This intelligence alarmed me, as I feared that he was thus early manifesting symptoms of that terrible disease, consumption, which had been singularly fatal to my family. But an early post re-assured me, and re-established so much of serenity as *I* could ever enjoy, by bringing me intelligence of his complete recovery.

But serenity, even comparative, and alternated by the fierce stings of my remorse, was too great a luxury for me to enjoy long. The torturer saw me, though he was unseen—the thunder-cloud was full charged, though it had not yet sent forth its destroying flash.—My peril was near me, though I seemed happy to all and enviable to many; and I, who had as yet feared nothing but my own conscience, and the ONE whom all must fear, and who had bowed the knee to Him only, was now to tremble before a human wretch, viler even than myself, and sue to him for a brief continuance of the life I loathed, yet dreaded to depart from; and, like the Romans of Rome's more dege-

nerate day, to purchase peace, because I dared not battle for it!

Wearied one evening with reading, I stood gazing upon the little garden beneath my window, and ever and anon casting my eyes upward to the clear sky, in which the moon rode high in her immaculate and calm splendour. Far from all the feculent and fierce scenes of my troubled life were my thoughts, as I gazed, and called to mind the sublime though erroneous fancies of the mighty minds of an elder day; and if ever, after I became a homicide, I knew complete calm of mind, it was during the hour that I thus gazed and thus dreamed, rather than meditated. Suddenly a black gloom sailed along the previously cloudless and bright sky; and, for many seconds, the lustrous moon was veiled and utterly hidden from my sight. Had I not often witnessed a similar veiling of the bright ruler of the night? Had not all who ever gazed forth upon the silent beauty of the night hours, when the very earth seems hushed in repose, and the stars seem to watch

above and smile upon its dreamless slumber, seen the same sudden darkening and utter veiling of the Phœnician's calm-visaged Astarte? I had; thousands and tens of thousands had; from the shepherds who kept their watch in Bethlehem, to the peasant-poet of our own day and our own nation, who has listened in rapt pleasure to the sighing of the night winds in Ettrick, and dreamed waking dreams, which emperors and their sycophants might envy, upon Yarrow. But *that* darkening abashed my gaze, and filled my soul with a speechless and vague dread. I knew that the footsteps of the messenger of evil were already at my gate; and, drawing down the blind with a convulsive and desperate effort, I sank into the nearest seat, trembling and amazed; as women when the foeman has entered the beleaguered city, in his wrath and in his might.

Before I had well rallied my presence of mind, and dressed my features in assumed calmness and serenity, my servant entered and

announced that a *man*——had the wretch possessed even the shabby decency of appearance of a tenth-rate clerk in an attorney's office, my well-bred menial would have called him a gentleman, or at the very least a "person,"——your flunkies are marvellously shrewd of observation and nice in appellative distinctions,——wished to see me immediately upon particularly important and pressing business.

"Admit him," said I, as soon as I could master the convulsive workings of my throat, which seemed to forbid speech and threaten suffocation. Something in my manner, or perhaps in the laboured and choked tone in which I spoke, attracted the attention and excited the alarm of my attached and faithful domestic. Instead of leaving the room to do my bidding, he lingered and looked at me with an expression of countenance which very plainly said, "You are in one of your fits of bad health again, and if this fellow's any annoyance to you, deuce a foot shall he come

beyond the hall." But I had now called up a something of the scorning and stern spirit of my fiercer and more fiery days, and I shouted "Admit him!" in a tone so loud and so enraged as to send the faithful fellow from the room with a celerity very contrary to his usually deliberate style of locomotion.

Are there *not* omens in the sky and in the air, and on the earth? Are there *not* mysterious intelligences, impalpable indeed to our finite and dim gaze, yet felt and understood by the immortal tenant of our clay, and attendant ever upon us, to warn us of coming calamities and to announce to us that final and awful change which we all await, and upon which so few of us sufficiently or rightly meditate? Does Philosophy deny it? Give Philosophy its cap and bells, that its sages may make music to the strange antics with which they furnish wonder for their contemporaries, and laughter, ignorant as their own figments, to their posterity. The philosophers of Greece could deride and oppose each



other's theories; the monk of the darker days of cloistered phantasy could sneer at them all; and we, in our turn, less ignorant in some things, but more presumptuous and vain-glorious in all, can sneer at and criticize the more obvious errors of them both. And yet we who can perceive error in the Porch and short-sighted insufficiency of knowledge in the glorious one of Academe,—we tumultuous, worldly,—we “of the earth earthy,” who deride study in any, and forbid it in any noble or useful degree, to all but the privileged few,—we who should let a Socrates, did we possess one, rot in a debtor's gaol and recommend a Plato for examination before a commission *de lunatico inquirendo*, while rewarding a thick-heeled dancer with a fortune for a month's pirouetting,—we dare to appeal to philosophy to deny what the thrilled frames and astonished hearts of thousands compel them to affirm!

Perhaps I am as much in error in believing and trusting omens as others are in denying and deriding; but at least I am correct in

demanding that none shall dogmatize where none can prove, and that no man shall expect me to discard my own *felt* ground of belief, for his hard-headed or cold-hearted and self-satisfied sneer.

At all events, right or wrong in my general attention to omens, thus much is certain, my feelings, on the eventful night of which I am writing, deceived me not one jot or one tittle.

My servant returned, and ushered in the person whose waiting he had announced: it was the man who had some time before scrutinized my features and dogged me to my very house. His appearance I cannot more fittingly describe than by saying that the sensible thing, on meeting a fellow of his figure on Finchley Common, late at night, would be to cock your pistols if you had them, and to ride hard for life and purse if you had not. Dark-complexioned and sinister, his face scowled out from the huge masses of whiskers and beard by which it was surrounded with an expression which would have made the fortune

of a stage villain. The somewhat foreign look of his costume puzzled me to decide whether he looked most like one of the Buccaneers of my boyish reading or one of the half-smugglers, half-fishermen, who in more modern times compelled the storm-lashed ocean to receive again the victims its more relenting and pitiful rage had resolved to spare.

We were left alone together, and for a few moments we gazed silently; I in but half-consciousness, and struggling with the confused recollections which now dawned upon my memory and now departed into a wild chaos; and he, seemingly, in a triumphant and confirmed conviction of what he had before believed but doubtingly, and in a mingled fear and hope.

"It is he," at length said my visitant, "it is he, but altered—sadly altered. There is the high and broad, but not the unwrinkled and smooth, forehead; the fire of the eye is quenched, and the lip has less of resolution, if it has no less of scorn. But if the mind is tamed somewhat, it

has grown with his growth, and strengthened as he has *lost* strength."

"What insolent mummery is this?" I demanded. "What is your purpose in thus intruding upon my privacy and raving in the rhodomontade of a crack-brained player? what is your business? and whom do you seek?"

"I have the *honour*," said he, with a withering and ghastly sneer upon his curled and pale lips, "to speak to the *celebrated* Douglas D'Arcy?"

"You *have* that honour," I replied; "and I beg that you will enjoy it as briefly as may consort with your good pleasure and convenience."

"And yet," responded my torturer—my mastering and tyrannizing fiend, "I deemed that I had known you under a less euphonious and high-sounding name, and in scenes something less luxurious than this splendid retreat of guilt and imposture. There *was* a time when the trade of *saving* life was not so familiar to him whom I knew as \*\*\*\*\*;"—— and the

hateful and triumphant villain whispered my real name, but in a whisper that went deep and terrible to my inmost heart, and spoke trumpet-toned to me of past guilt and present peril.

Desperation and violence were in my thoughts for a brief breathing-space, and I cast my kindling and dilated eyes towards my fire-arms, which hung, long unused but constantly loaded, above the busts of the mighty ones whose genius I most revered, and whose memory I most loved. But the thought of bloodshed smote and sickened my heart, and I unconsciously murmured as I turned my glance from the instruments of death,—“No, no! enough of blood is already upon my hand, and upon my head.”

“Hear him, hear him confess it,” cried my bane and my curse; “hear him confess that he is a murderer!”

I saw the imprudence, the ruinous imprudence of my admission, when it was too late to repair the mischief; and I could but faintly

and with difficulty mutter something of "an affair of honour" being the subject of my allusion. But I had to deal with one who was not to be thus egregiously deceived.

"An affair of *honour*!" was his response,—"ay, they were honourable men, all *honourable* men, who banded together to carry fire and sword among the peaceable and industrious of their compatriots, and to convert a peaceful and smiling land into a charnel and an abomination. And he was an *honourable* man, or boy, who when the conservators of law and social order had tracked the guilty ones to their brooding and foul shelter, re-assured the guilt that quailed, gave new life and energy to the guilt that was bolder or more insensible, and shouting the appropriate battle cry of 'FIGHT LIKE MEN, OR DIE LIKE DOGS,' brandished his fatal blade, to the rescue of the guilty, and to the maiming and *murdering* of the innocent!"

My strength, upon which I had once so vaunted and gratulated myself, had departed from me now, and I sank back powerless and

in a syncope of terror and perplexity. My brain reeled, and the pressure of a world seemed to be on my heart; I gasped in a vain attempt to speak, like him who sees in his troubled sleep unearthly and ghastly faces mowing and threatening before him, and yet cannot scream for aid or shout in defiance or interrogatory.

## CHAP. XX.

My pitiable and stricken state touched, I believe, even the icy and hard heart of him to whom I owed it ; for when I at length returned to a clear consciousness of my circumstances and condition, he was kneeling by my side and holding to my nostrils the hartshorn which my frequent faintings caused me to keep constantly upon my writing-table ; and there was, when I first glanced at his features, an expression upon them of pity or anxiety. Perhaps it was the latter ; arising from fear of the consequences which would probably accrue to himself, should I die during his untimely and unsought visit.

But were it ruth or were it fear that produced the expression, it vanished from his



features the instant that he perceived my recovery ; and it was with his former fiendish sneer that he said,—

“ Of a verity, there must be something enervating in the gorgeous accommodations by which you are surrounded. Or perhaps it is the aristocratic name of D’Arcy which has annihilated the indomitable daring and scornful hauteur of the plebeian \*\*\*\*\* ; the darling of the disaffected, and the hope and rallying-point of the bloody and the unsparing. Why, man, your liveried lackeys are within call, if you fear violence from so meek a man as I am !”

“ True it is,” he added, as he threw aside his thick coarse jacket, and displayed the shining barrels of a brace of pistols, and the handle of a stout dirk, “ true it is that, if I were compelled to defend myself, I should not fall quite unavenged ; and no less true it is that I could render all violence on my part unnecessary, and all zeal on the part of your domestics unavailing, by the facile and brief act

of charging with murder and rebellion that \*\*\*\*\* , whose apprehension would be no ill-received or ill-rewarded service to the state!"

"Man! monster! devil!" I exclaimed, "what is it you require?—What murder is it with which you dare to charge me? My rebellion I succeeded in clearing myself of."

"But not of the murder which *I* saw you commit, and of which *I* can bring such corroborating proof, as would validate the evidence of the dark personage to whom you so courteously—I will not say how *prudently*, for I am not too patient—compare me. I saw you smite down the traitor Mayhew;—the blood that spurted from his false heart upon your hand plashed hot upon my face, and beneath my foot. I fought beside you then; and we will be safe or lost together now."

Oh! the enervating, the soul-debasing power of an evil conscience! There was a day when a tenth of the sneering insult I had now endured so tamely would have cost the insulter twenty lives, had he possessed them. But my

strength and my pride had departed from me now ; and I sobbed like a beaten child as I exclaimed, " Have mercy upon my misery, and state your demands and your views ! "

" Now, that's the most sensible speech I've heard from your lips to-night," he replied. — " I am a reasonable man—very, after my fashion ; so, when I shall have tasted the good cheer to which, no doubt, you will bid me heartily welcome, we'll enter into business more particularly."

I loathed the sneering and bitter wretch ; and yet my eyes, once so steadfast and soul-searching, quailed before his ; and, in the presence of his more reckless and hard spirit, mine was abashed and powerless.

I rang the bell, and ordered in refreshments and wine ; and, when the servant had set them down and retired, I bade my self-invited and most unwelcome guest to help himself.

" I am an old traveller," said he, " and I have often known the wine of the unwilling host to be as fatal as the steel of the open and

defying foe ; and, though I am very sensible of the high honour you will do me by the condescension I ask, I must beg you to be my taster as well as my host."

Remonstrance, it was obvious, would be of no avail ; and, pouring about half a glassful of wine from one of the two decanters which stood between us, I drank it with a seemingly frank and cheerful compliance. But I had not yet quite satisfied him ; for, as I replaced the emptied glass upon the tray, he said :

"Nay, mine host, that is but land-lubber's courtesy. What ! not a 'good health,' or 'God be wi' ye,' to your loving guest ; nor a *loyal* health to your king, or 'internal peace and external triumph' to your beloved country—not one of the pretty sayings with which elderly gentlemen in their after-dinner potations apologize to decency for their forgetfulness of temperance ? Taste of t'other bottle, man ; it looks right Xeres, and I shall drink it to the last spoonful."

Again I complied ; and the brute now fell

upon the cold collation which was before him with a ravenousness and celerity of execution, which made me marvel how he could so long have refrained from the repast of which he stood in such obvious need.

"Casta Maria! your name ought to be D'Arcy, or something more romantic and lady-winning than that," said he, as he at length leaned back, satiated and luxurious, in the easiest of my easy chairs. "You have a right taste in wine, and your fowls are roasted to admiration. Out! ah, but there's another bottle on the table; and, while I finish it, we can discuss our affairs like cordial and loving brothers, as we are. That I know you is plain enough—past praying for, as the Spaniard said of the dead bull. But do you know me?"

"Not from Adam; though the tones of your voice occasionally seem familiar to me."

"Good! very good! I *am* Adam! You have not quite forgotten the name of Adam Maxwell?"

"Maxwell!"

The same. My beard, to be sure, is somewhat darker than it was wont to be, and just now it is somewhat of the longest; and while broiling in hot latitudes has darkened my skin, conversing with scamps of as many languages as bothered the builders of Babel has taken somewhat of canny Scotland from my speech, but we *hae foregathered lang syne for a' that, man*. Voto a Dios! Your wine's perfect. You know me now?"

"What! gentleman Maxwell, he to whom we looked for the keenest sword and the strongest arm in the fight which we anticipated?"

"Humph! Not much of the *gentleman*, save by birth: but you read me aright. The wealth of all the Maxwell's since the flood would not have been beyond my wants when I was a lad; and, sooth to say, my staid and moral countrymen had other processes besides that of horning against me; and I was fain to make my heels tread lightly on the earth, lest they should dance upon nothing some fine morning;

and when I came among you southrons, I had more wants than groats. I had not long reached the metropolis ere I was picked up by your friend, Captain Arthur ; and, faith ! a very pretty scrimmage we should have made of it, if that lubber Mayhew had not caught us keeping a blind look-out."

"But you escaped on the night of the—the —."

"*Murder* of Mayhew ? Exactly so ; and having no curiosity about the internal aspect of Newgate, I made the best of my way to the water-side, and while the wise men of Gotham were poking here, and prying there, to find honest gentlemen for the hangman to operate upon, I was bowling across the broad Atlantic at the rate of ten knots an hour."

"As a sailor ? I should have thought the life of a country gentleman had but ill suited you for such an employment."

"You would think perfectly right. I went before the mast, to work my passage over, not doubting that among the new republics which

were already by the ears, I should find the '*panem et circenses*' which would suffice to pass away my time very pleasantly."

"I understand you; you have been more of a soldier than a sailor?"

"You err, mine host," said he—"but the bottle;" and he held up the empty decanter with more of a drollery in his eyes than I could have supposed him capable of. My situation was sufficiently embarrassing and painful. Hitherto his inordinate draughts of wine had improved rather than deteriorated his temper and bearing; but it was far from unlikely that, if he *could* at length become intoxicated, his infernal malignity would break out into loud and furious revilings, which would put it out of my power to escape exposure, by unintentionally making others the sharers of his most fatal knowledge. On the other hand, I dreaded lest any delay in complying with his request should have the same effect as might, or possibly might not, result from his over-indulgence, and, as the least of two evils,



ordered in a fresh supply of wine, to which he helped himself with the thirst of a new comer, and with the familiarity of an old friend. "Well!" he resumed, when he had taken a glass or two, "for a few days all went well enough; the weather was fair, the weevils did not more than equal the flour in our biscuit, and we had almost enough of it to eat. But when we were fairly at sea the face of affairs suddenly changed. It blew great guns, we had scarcely turned into our wet hammocks when we turned out again to close-reef top-sails, the yards creaking the while beneath mountainous masses of waves. It was an infernal night that. Such lightning, such thunder, and such a sea! I prayed that night!"

"It was a pity you were not——."

"Lost? Devil takes care of his own; though we did lose three smart seamen, and tolerable reprobates enough. But I weathered the night through, and the next morning——"

So! thought I, as he paused, glared wildly around, and tossed off a bumper of wine, the

good Xeres begins to mount ; pray heaven he may be as sleepy in his cups as he was hungry before his supper. But I had altogether reckoned, not without my host indeed, but without my guest. I do not think he ever does sleep ! He had paused not in lack of speech, but in bitter and savage emotion ; and he speedily resumed, and, speaking slowly and between his teeth, and pausing between every word, he said—

“ The—next—morning—I—was flogged.”

“ Flogged ?”

“ Like a dog. Our skipper was a drunkard, a coward, and a fool. During the storm of the preceding night he had scarcely been able to muster so much manhood as enabled him to keep the deck ; and his orders were so contradictory, and his skill so small, that but for the fine seamanship of our mate we should have gone headlong to Davy’s locker. The day light and fair weather made him, I suppose, rather ashamed of his overnight’s weakness,

and, my faith! how he swaggered from stem to stern, finding fault with everything and abusing every one. I was never partial to hard work or short allowance, a brace of evils which were just then annoying me above a little, and the skipper's abuse, of which I came in for my share, had not the effect of at all mollifying my temper. So, at last, after reefing here and unfurling there, without giving the particular gentleman satisfaction, for two or three hours, I had the opportunity to get below; and as I passed the skipper, I said to one of the men, quite sufficiently loud for the ear of the skipper for whose especial edification I intended it, 'I say, Tom, I think the foremast ought to be unshipped now and brought more aft.' The end of the matter was that *I was flogged.*"

"You did not long sail with that Captain, I guess?"

"*He died that night.*"

And this was said so coolly, with so little of

feeling of any kind in the tone of him who said it, that even *I* did not suspect the truth; and I quite innocently said,

“ Ah ! his death was sudden ? ”

“ Very,” was the reply; “ I lifted him, sheets and all, from his cot, and tossed him out of the cabin window; he shrieked, and I saw him struggling in the trough of the sea for more than a minute; but, as he could not swim, he went down, of course. Our natural philosophy professor used to tell us that non-natant bodies must sink, if not upheld by some external power; no power upheld his non-natant carcass—argal, he sank.”

“ And the crew ? ”

“ Were asleep, except myself and three more, who loved the captain as well as I, and their grog something better; and in the morning *I* was captain, and within two years we captured as many score of goodly craft.

“ Their crews ? ”

“ Walked the plank, man and mother's son.”

The cool villain!—My very flesh crawled upon my bones as he recounted his deeds of devilish and unsparing cruelty. But I had patiently and attentively listened to his harrowing recital, under the impression that, if I gave him full scope for his boastings, I should thus furnish myself with the means of fighting him with his own weapons, and prevent him from annoying me with any further threats, by threatening him, instead of bribing him. And, leaning half familiarly and half seriously on the table, and looking him steadfastly in the eyes, I said :

“Supposing, now, that I were to call in assistance, and deliver you, Adam Maxwell, over to the civil power as a murderer and a pirate ; do you not think that my ‘good service to the state’ would go far towards closing the state’s eyes to the homicide, in fair fight, of my earlier day?”

He drained his bumper to the very last bead with the most provoking and slow deliberation, and then replied :

"I do opine that it most certainly would do so, my most hospitable and astute host, if, firstly, you could *prove* that I have told you what I have said, and if, secondly, you could prove that, so telling you, I had done aught more than *tell* you a tale, instead of writing you one."

The truth of this was too obvious to admit of cavil or of dispute; and I felt that I was indeed completely at his mercy and in his power. And, after a brief pause, he again resumed his hateful discourse.

"I read your thoughts very plainly: you hate me, but you also fear me. Well! I had as lief hang you as a dog, unless I can get something worth while by letting you live.—What do you bid?"

"Monster!" I exclaimed, "name your desires, take your demand, and begone!"

"Good!—But my demand will not be so easily complied with. *Ed io anche son pittore*; I, too, love luxury, and have tastes to gratify; and you—the wealth—by—imposture—earning—

*you* must enable me to live as *you* live ; and when I cease to live so, *you* will cease to live at all !”

All the ready money I had in the house, a sum considerable enough to make his eyes sparkle with delight, though to me it was but a mere trifle, he carried away with him, promising to call again on the following day.— Wretchedly, oh ! wretchedly indeed did I pass all the remainder of that night ! I was at the mercy of the most reckless and heartless of mankind ; and a whim or a pique of his could consign me to the hopeless dungeon, there to lie in unpitied misery, until I should die violently and ignominiously. I formed a thousand projects for releasing myself from him, but dismissed them all as impracticable. And they were so. I am still his slave, and he is still my tyrant, my torturer, my curse !

## CHAP. XXI.

MORNING, if it brought no new hope to my mind, at least diminished my fever and perplexity, and enabled me more calmly and clearly to survey all the various bearings of my new annoyance. And my fear of exposure, and consequent ruin, was somewhat diminished, as I reflected that my ruin would not profit Maxwell, while my safety would. And, though I still dreaded some evil result either from his ungovernable temper or from his imprudence, I at length argued myself into something like a sense of at least temporary safety; and, by my usual hour of going abroad, I was sufficiently restored to self-possession and



calmness to be able to make the round of my just then very numerous patients.

Having done so, I ordered "home ;" when my servant reminded me that I had omitted to visit a person whose card had been left on the preceding evening, with the strongest injunctions of punctuality. To this person I accordingly proceeded, and was set down at one of the shabbiest and most neglected houses in one of the paltriest of London's very many paltry and beggarly squares.

Dust and cobwebs were so thick upon all the windows, as to render them almost impervious to the blessed and blessing light, which they were originally intended to admit. The bell-wire, having been broken by accident, remained unrepaired ; and the knocker, tied up at the time, had a thick coat of honeycomb, instead of the paint which many a year before had disappeared from its surface. When the door, after much vehement knocking together of sheep's-skin and cast iron, was at length opened, appearances were so far from im-

proving, that the interior of the house looked even worse than the exterior. The oil-cloth in the hall was worn into great holes, and destitute of paint, and the hall-lamp matted with dust, and tenanted by a flourishing and undisturbed colony of spiders. The stairs, too, were destitute of carpet; the balusters rotting by default of cleanliness and paint; and the once-handsome stained-glass window of the staircase denuded of half its panes, leaving the head of Brutus without a body, and the body of his son, appropriately enough, without a head to its shoulders.

The feeble and dirty old woman who admitted me to this forlorn and cheerless abode, parcel blind as she was, noted the wonder and hesitation with which I entered it; and hastened to assure me, with the garrulous fussiness of senility, that her master was as rich as a Jew, "for all the place looked so poverty-struck." And then she proceeded, as she led me along the desolate passage, to tell me that,

when her "poor missus was alive, it was another guess sort of a place, I warrant ye!"

Leaving me for an instant while she announced my arrival to the owner of this cheerless mansion, she shortly returned, and ushered me into what had once been a handsome and spacious library, and which even now, filthy, neglected, and littered as it was, contained such ample store of valuable books, as seemed to indicate that the owner's bosom had not always been wholly tenanted by the low and grovelling vice of avarice; the mere and spiritless love of *having*, which even precludes its owner from the exertion and the adventure necessary to *getting*, while it renders his existence an anxious and cowardly curse to himself, and, *at the least*, utterly *useless* to his fellow-men.

On a couch, drawn close up to the fire—the only cheerful object visible in the room—half sat, half lay, a man, whose age, notwithstanding the snowy whiteness of his hair, and the deep-

graven lines of his haggard and pale face, did not appear to me to exceed fifty. Beside and behind him stood four or five persons of both sexes, of creditable but strikingly plebeian appearance; and who, even when I entered, did not remit in their officious attention, or offer to quit the room, though I hinted the propriety of their doing so as plainly as my own delicacy would allow me. But the vultures were gathered together from afar off; they had scented their prey, and had marked it for their own;—and nothing short of absolute force would have removed them from what they thought the death-scene of that unloved and unloving man, whose faint and difficult breathing was the sole barrier between them and his vast hoard of unenjoyed wealth.

Finding that it would be impossible to procure their absence without putting myself to considerably more expense of time and trouble than I felt inclined to waste upon an object so entirely unimportant, excepting as regarded a delicacy of feeling of which they seemed to be

very comfortably unconscious, I proceeded to question my patient. His broad chest and well-formed throat and head indicated the possession of an originally fine constitution. And though his shrunken limbs, worn features, and attenuated hands, which had a sickly yellow tinge, and literally seemed to be almost transparent, spoke of extreme debility, I could elicit nothing from him by which I could assign a cause for it. I more than once suspected that his illness, like that of the artist's infant daughter, arose from mere inanition; but the supposition seemed to be completely negatived by the tumbler of mulled wine that stood smoking upon the salver before him, beside a very inviting and sufficient-looking slice of rich plum-cake. But the more I inquired, and the longer I pondered, the more firm became my conviction that the perverse man had voluntarily inflicted upon himself the horrible agonies of starvation, to escape from which many a human being has perilled body in this life, and soul in that to come.

At length I resolved to put the question plainly to him. I did so, and, before he could find strength to give me an answer, his numerous nephews and nieces simultaneously broke out into a declaration that he had well nigh starved himself to death. And one claimed to have lit the first fire that had cheered his room or warmed his attenuated frame for months; another had brought him the finest poultry and the sweetest butter the distance of more than a score of miles; a third had been sitting up with him for three nights—a piece of beneficence which the rest seemed to regard with no peculiar satisfaction; while another, though she had given him nothing—for she, for her part, was but ill to do in the world, and had nothing to give—had warmed his own wine, which she now proceeded to press upon him with a most dutiful pertinacity and earnestness. Money, money! thou art, indeed, a potent and a soul-debasing devil!

And there reclined the feeble and suffering man, turning his hollow and glassy eyes now

to one speaker and now to another ; exciting hope in each successively, and watched by all as anxiously as ever was sultan by the favourites whom a day and an accident had raised from janissaries to court minions, basking in splendour and luxury, and whom a minute and a whisper might convert into headless and weltering corpses.

But he at length recovered sufficient strength to raise himself upon his couch, and he inquired, glaring so wildly that I feared the dread of death would drive him into that worse than death, insanity—

“Is there any hope? I am rich, I am very rich; save me for but a year, a month, a week, and my will shall pay you handsomely, *handsomely!*”

“Calm yourself,” I replied: “you are, without doubt, very terribly reduced, but you are in no immediate danger.”

“Save me, cure me; I’ll take anything, do anything you wish—but save me, save me, and my will shall pay you *very* handsomely ”

"Your safety," I responded, "rests chiefly with yourself. I shall merely prescribe you some simple and not unpalatable strengthening medicines; and a proper indulgence in the generous diet which your appetite demands, and which, possessing wealth, as you say you do, it is an act of positively suicidal wickedness to deny yourself, will, without some extraordinary accident or change in your constitution, render you as likely to live twenty or thirty years longer as any man of your apparent years I ever met with."

"Then I'll not leave you a guinea, or pay you a shilling!"—said the infatuated man, to whom, *after life*, gold was honour, respectability, *everything*—"you've done nothing but talk to me; and you shan't plunder me with your Latin, and your doctor's stuff. Bark and Port wine are the best of strengtheners—our surgeon said so when I was in the army—and I'll eat all day. Ay, eating's wasteful enough, but not so bad as buying physic." And, so saying,



he fell back on his couch, exhausted with the effort of speaking at unusual length, but clutching the cloak in which he was wrapped, with a convulsive energy indicative of the stubbornness with which he would resist any attempt to coax or threaten him out of a coin of his darling money.

I would fain have prescribed such restoratives as his state required, but I could not bring my mind to sufficient humility to enable me to hear a merely humane duty imputed to a desire to get from this deluded and miserable dotard a fee which I could nearly as well dispense with as he could spare; and I therefore took my leave, only tarrying to whisper to the most seemingly feeling and sensible of his relatives some necessary cautions as to his transition from starvation to good living.

As I passed through the hall, the aged crone who had admitted me, hastened, as well as her debility bent double would allow her, to open the door for my egress. And while I sought

for my purse to give her the small gratuity which her civility seemed to merit and her poverty to require, she inquired,—

“Is master better ; will he get well ?”

“He has only to live well,” said I, “in order to do well. He wants nourishment.”

“And the more shame for him,” said the crone, “when he sleeps, as a body might say, upon gold. His couch is hollow, and stuffed as full of guineas as an egg’s full of meat. But I warrant me he’ll ha’ plenty of nourishment now they hungry creturs ha’ got about him ; and God send they may feed him till he gets well enough to live ’em all out. Ah, sir, it’s very awful to see them wiping his pale face, and waiting on him like niggers before his face, and cursing him and wishing him dead behind his back, a miserable deceived old man.”

Giving the old woman some silver, and briefly replying in the affirmative to the truth of her observations, I left the house of the miser, and drove home, where I was anxious to arrive before my tormentor, Maxwell, should pay his

promised—I should, perhaps, more correctly say, his threatened—visit.

But before I return again to him, it will not be amiss to speak of the end of the miser. It was about two months after my unfee'd and unthanked visit to him, that a paragraph caught my attention in my morning paper, announcing the demise—of course, with the editor's "we regret to say"—"of Job Thornhill, Esq., a gentleman of immense wealth and singular habits, whose integrity and charity in his dealings with others more than compensated for the unsparing rigour with which he mortified and macerated himself. He died universally lamented; and we understand that he died intestate, so that his vast property will be distributed among his numerous relations, some of whom will thus be suddenly raised to opulence from extremely straitened and necessitous circumstances."

"*Magna est pecunia, et prævalebit,*" thought I, as I read this praise of the departed and niggard Dives; and I took an opportunity that

very day to make inquiries among the most knowing of my acquaintance, as to Mr. Thornhill's former life and character. I found no great difficulty in getting at the information I required; for, though I had been ignorant of his existence until he claimed my professional attendance, he was a gentleman widely known and much talked about.

Early in life he had served abroad as a military officer; and, having contrived to amass a considerable fortune, he returned to England, and married a young woman of singular beauty, but of mean origin and humble circumstances. To her he was attached with a strength and warmth of affection of which those who best knew him had not supposed him to be capable; and though, after the custom of people of her class when suddenly raised into opulence, she was to the last degree extravagant and fond of company and show, even his great and growing avarice gave way to his love and admiration of her. Some speculations, by which his sagacity assured him

that he *could not* lose, having suddenly produced him a vast accession of wealth, his young and giddy wife insisted upon a portion of it being applied to affording her the pleasure which she anticipated from a continental tour. The prudential and economical resolutions of man, even of middle-aged and money-loving man, are of small potency when opposed to the half-reproachful, half-coaxing smiles and intreaties of a young and beautiful wife ; and after due gravity and inefficiency of opposition, Mr. Thornhill consented to the proposed tour ; and a yacht was freighted for the sole use of the wealthy couple and their suite. Among their baggage was a box which contained, besides a large sum in specie, some diamonds of unusual size and beauty, and of immense value ; so valuable, indeed, were they, that their owner had carried them constantly with him from the time when he first brought them from the sunny and wondrous East.

Our tourists had been but three days from their splendidly appointed home, when a

storm arose which bade defiance to the efforts of the scanty, and probably not too skilful, crew. In the middle watch of the night, the dismayed and disheartened captain informed his passengers that his only hope of preserving them lay in their taking to the boat. Mr. Thornhill had already assisted his trembling and almost lifeless lady to the deck, when, remembering the box that contained his beloved money, and his still more beloved diamonds, he suddenly, and without warning, loosed his hold of her arm, and darted half frantic into the cabin, which was already fast filling with water. Wading through the usurping brine, and dashing aside the costly articles of furniture, which were displaced and floating from side to side, he caught sight of his precious treasure, and regained the deck just soon enough to see his wife swept far into the boiling ocean by a tremendous billow, and to hear the one piteous and piercing shriek which told him that, in this world, he should gaze no more upon her beautiful and loving features.

From that fatal and terrible night he was never seen to smile ; and avarice, which love had for a time mitigated and partially subdued, became the sole and despotic ruler of his heart.

It was with difficulty that his own life was preserved ; and when he at length reached England, he shut himself up in his house with but one domestic—the squalid and feeble old woman whom I had seen there ; denying himself the merest necessities of life, and having through each entire year—one day excepted—no occupation, no care, no amusement, but guarding and counting his hoarded and useless gold ; to which every half-year added the huge dividends on his funded property, and the rents of two or three estates of great extent and value.

And the *one* day of his diversion from his monotonous companionship with the useless gold which claimed the remainder of his year ; was that spent in bacchanalian festivity ? Did rich viands exhale their unusual odours in his

hall of banquet, and the generous wines foam bright and frequent to the lips of loving and glad friends? On that sad day, the anniversary of the one—the sole evil event of his otherwise singularly auspicious life, he rose early, locked, bolted, and barred his library—now alike his treasury and his dungeon—and proceeded to the suite of drawing-rooms on the first floor. There everything remained in the same state—excepting only the ravages of dust, moth, and time, the winged and destroying moth of the universe—as when SHE had last passed through in the pride of youth and beauty, and with the joyaunt expectation that fluttered her heart beaming in her liquid and lustrous eyes, to depart upon that fatal journey from which she was doomed never again to return. And during the live-long day his heavy and rapid footsteps would be heard by his aged domestic, as he paced unceasingly and in deep anguish to and fro that scene of former gaiety and love. When the evening at length darkened down, he would reclose the shutters, lock



and bolt the door, to be opened no more for another year, and return again to his library, to gloat upon the golden wealth which alone of earthly things could now please his eye or warm his heart. For long years he had led this kind of life, and when he had sent for me, the pauper relatives of his deceased wife had for some days been established in his house, in the hope that his death was inevitable. And in point of fact, if they had desired to hasten his death, they could not in malice have pursued a more certain course to doing so, than they did in their eagerness and officious desire to distinguish themselves in attention to him. He was so incessantly and injudiciously pampered in his diet, that his long-macerated and excessively debilitated frame could not bear the powerful effect of a change so sudden and complete; and a brain fever supervened, which defied all the skill of the profession, and carried him off in four and twenty hours from the first appearance of its symptoms.

His vast sums of ready money were divided

instantly among themselves by his dutiful nephews and nieces. But they quarrelled as to the distribution of his funded and real property, and commenced suits in Chancery, which bid very fair to remain pending after the youngest of their children shall have descended into the peace and the silence of an obscure grave.

Strange is the diversity of forms in which the agony of a stricken and bleeding human heart doth manifest itself; from the pallid silence of hate, brooding over its wrongs and anticipating its revenge, to the slaving idiotcy of the utterly debased and broken spirit, that seeks oblivion of its cares in that intoxication from which it awakens in a redoubled misery, and from day to day thus alternates the reckless insensibility of brutes, and a fierceness of suffering and agony which might quell the enduring virtue of a Prometheus! And yet, even while we manifest our own weakness in the mode dictated by our own idiosyncratic peculiarity, how coldly do we sneer at, or how

mercilessly do we judge, the manifestations of weakness which the miseries of others wring from their subdued or originally weak nature !

Peace be with the miser ! and be his selfish hoarding, and his frigid and folded uselessness to his kind, forgotten, or at the least forgiven in our remembrance of the one utterly-crushing blow which annihilated the all which blessed and softened his heart ! We need not falsely laud him, indeed ; but let us not too sternly judge or too bitterly censure him. He was human, and therefore he erred ; and though his errors were not, it may be, of like kind with our own, we, too, stand in need of the charitable judgment of our contemporaries ; to our lives, and of the charitable forbearance of our posterity when we shall at length lie in the silence of the grave, and

“ In cold obstruction's apathy.”

Very recently I passed by the house of the miser. It is now even more forlorn in its a

pect than it was during the lifetime of its niggard and unenjoying owner ; and of the many gay and happy beings who pass its gloomy and unfrequented porch, few fail to speak in reprobation of the miser's errors, while scarce one besides myself adds a word in pity or palliation, or even thinks of the misery he endured ; self-caused, perchance, as self-inflicted, but not therefore the less keen in its pangs, or the less difficult in its endurance. And thus it is that innocence, like prosperity, makes us, not unfrequently, unconsciously hard-hearted ; while error—the error that reflects and repents—resembles adversity, in its power to make us mindful of the sufferings, and pitiful of the weaknesses, of those whose feelings we can enter into the more readily, because we, too, have been stricken, and had not strength to resist the stroke, and suffering when none drew nigh to pity, to pardon, or to advise. A marvel and a secret is the human heart ; and were I now about to live, and not die, so well do I know the inconsistency of that strange and

disguised thing, that I much question if the utmost wrongs and the extremest sufferings would not have the effect of making me pity my kind, instead of steeling my heart against it, as, to my own utter destruction, I have formerly done. But the days wax and wane, and the mysterious power that is working within my enfeebled and suffering frame will ere long render my penitence unavailing, and my wiser and more humane philosophy impracticable.

## CHAP. XXII.

WHEN Maxwell paid me his second unwelcome visit, I hailed it as an omen of possible good issue to our acquaintance, that he had applied some portion of the money which he had extorted from me to making a great and striking improvement in the appearance of his outer man. Divested of its shaggy beard, and of the greater portion of its preposterous whiskers, his face had a something of manly and commanding beauty; and he was appareled in a style of fashion, which just stopped short of actual dandyism. To an indifferent observer, there was nothing discernible about him which should make him an unfit or an unpleasing associate to a wealthy and intellectual

man. But I, painfully aware of his real character, and of the utter ferocity of his nature, could discern—and I trembled as I did so—a mingled recklessness and wily design in the expression of his eye; and I resolved that, if anything like a moderate and reasonable sacrifice could purchase my future exemption from his overbearing and insolent companionship, I would make that sacrifice without hesitation, and enjoy my freedom with thankfulness.

It was night when he arrived, and we postponed the discussion of his claims, and my situation, until we should have supped and retired to my library. And to one who delights in marking and pondering upon the difference which circumstances make in the boastful and vain-glorious creature, man, it would have been no unwelcome or useless occupation to note the decorous and well-bred “trifling with the dainty fare,” with which he, on his former visit so ravenous and brute-like in his ecstatic and eager devouring, comported

himself at the supper-table ; and to observe the respectful attention which his improved appearance and gentlemanly manner extorted from my attached domestic, who, on the preceding night, would have needed but a word from me to have spurned him from my door.

After supper we adjourned to my study, and it occurred to me to open our conversation by an inquiry as to the means by which he had discovered me, notwithstanding my altered circumstances and my feigned name and profession.

“ Good ! ” said he, “ I wonder you had not asked that question before. It was a mere accident ; and a lucky one it was, too. — You don’t think so ? Good again ! What’s one man’s meat is another man’s poison ; I gain by it, and you lose ; you hate it, and I like it ; all very proper, and as credible, (and far more intelligible) as it would be if a score or two of moral philosophers were to expound the why and the wherefore to us, from now to the finishing of the fifth bottle. Talking of



that, your glass is full, and mine's empty. Empty, refill, and pass the bottle. *Ah!* delicious wine that! 'curiously fine Claret,' as the wine-merchants' advertisements have it. "Well! years of bold and industrious exertion made me as wealthy as I desired to be. And to tell you the truth, when the sallow republicans of South America showed some symptoms of returning common sense, and gave tokens of an inclination to that unanimity in which all their best and truest interests were concerned, I thought that a few thousand miles of ocean being between me and their territory would greatly conduce to my longevity and welfare. When a nation is split into numerous petty and mutually hostile states, your pirate may hoist his black flag in the assurance that his death's head and cross-bones will scare the small powers from his path, and leave all that seek and all that quit their ports, to fight, fly, or surrender to him as they best may. But when the many, and singly feeble, states band together for the

mutual defence of their general interests, and for the mutual vindication of their insulted honour and invaded rights, he will chiefly show his judgment by crowding every inch of canvass, and making the best of his way to some land in which he is less known, or the people less united. And I not only saw indications of a South American union, likely to be very fatal to my peculiar system of free trading, but I perceived also that my ragamuffins were not altogether as blind to the state of the case as I could have desired that they should be. My orders were not as implicitly or as cheerfully obeyed as they were wont to be ; and more than once I received dark and insolent hints of the peril in which I should be placed if any one of them chose to reveal but a tithe of my past performances. We were in port, and covered by guns enough to have blown twenty such craft as mine out of water at a volley ; and, in short, in the course of a life of much peril, and more adventure, I never before or since had such

lively ideas of those very ugly matters, the gallows and the hangman. There is no councillor, take my word for it, like a bumper. I took council with mine, and my resolution was speedily taken and as speedily acted upon. The civil broils of the republicans had developed, as is usual in such cases, all the evil as well as many of the nobler and better spirits of the land ; and thousands had fought in the name of liberty who attached no other signification to it than an impunity to themselves in the slaughter and rapine with which they vexed their torn and suffering country. And now that hostilities had ceased, and authority, long dormant, had, at length, awakened to its duty, and made some terrible examples of a few bold and luckless adventurers, all the larger towns abounded with starving scoundrels who dared not rob and would not work. This was especially the case in the port at which I lay ; and when I had been ashore in my assumed character of an English merchant, I had

noticed the resort of a goodly company of worthies much out at elbows, and not very frequently upon intimate terms with a good dinner.

“Late one night, having previously affected more than usual cordiality with my crew, and supplied them with grog enough to insure and their sleeping soundly until morning, I stepped into the boat, and rowed ashore; where I so industriously and successfully exerted myself, that in two hours I had engaged a crew of as athletic and unscrupulous gentlemen as ever smoked cigaritas or sported tawny hides. Some of them boarded my boat, and others a couple which they borrowed for the nonce from a merchant ship; and swiftly but silently we proceeded to *Le Diable Noir*, the real name of my craft, which, however, for a month or two, she had sunk in the more moral and mercantile title of the *Hope and Industry*.

“We were speedily aboard, and having secured ourselves from interruption in the

event of any extraordinary accident awakening the intoxicated scamps who were snoring below, by fast battening down the hatches, we slipped our cable, and towed our craft quietly and safely out of port. The good folks ashore suspected nothing until it was too late; and their numerous shot fell short and innocuous into the sleepy waters. But our peril was not yet past; for the confounded rattling of the otherwise innocent artillery roused up my sleeping worthies, who crowded in all haste and consternation to the hatchways. Finding themselves battened down, they at once guessed rightly at the real state of the case; and while one proposed to scuttle the craft, another vowed with the worst oaths of half-a-dozen languages that he would forthwith set fire to her. I well knew that I had to deal with men who were quite as likely to do me such services as to threaten them, and therefore I deemed it expedient to give them a salute of small arms by way of cooling their courage. The measure had all the

---

effect I desired from it, and when the day at length dawned I had every man of them on deck and in irons, save four, who had been killed by our shot. We had a spanking breeze right abaft, and by mid-day were beyond all chance of pursuit. When we at length made land, I put my late crew, with a fair stock of broad pieces, into the larger of the boats we had borrowed, and saw them pulling hard and hearty for the shore."

"You will perhaps think that my lenity was rather excessive and imprudent. But firstly I knew that I should be leagues on my way, ere they could give any information or cause pursuit, and in the next place I well knew that the least guilty among them would have but short shrift, did he dare to make his real character known on the land to which I had started them. I was, in fact, so confident of their being discreetly silent there—well enough inclined as they were to deliver me to destruction in South America—that I had not an anxious thought for the future.

I had made up my mind to content myself with the ample wealth I had stowed away in my craft or the dusky cognomen, and to settle down in my native land as a respectable laird, farming my own broad acres and taking my kail in comfort. I forget most of what good King Jamie would have called my *humanities*, but I remember a distich quoted by old Lilly, which saith—

Nemo tam Divos habuit faventes,  
Ut crastinum sibi polliceri.

The false quantities you'll be good enough to excuse for the sake of the truth of the words; a truth of which I was doomed to have some rather expressive personal experience. I was already within sight of port, I had made arrangements for landing with my treasure and abandoning my ship to its new crew, when a gale arose such as I in the years of my nautical experience had never seen anything like. In a word, the good craft went down, and of all the reckless and bad men who had so lately

trod her deck in security and carelessness, I alone was thrown ashore—mangled, bruised, senseless, and, worst of all, pennyless.”

“ You landed in Scotland ?” I inquired.

“ Not I, indeed. I had beaten up for Ireland ; for, as I intended to live honestly and quietly for the rest of my days, it would have been but scant measure of wit to give my vagabond crew any track by which to find me, should their necessities impel them to mark me for extortion. I intended to travel from Ireland to England, thence to France, and *thence* to Scotland. But, as it was, it mattered little whither I wandered. The broad Atlantic was between me and some of those who could injure me, and sweeping deep and mighty above the carcasses of the rest. So, by dint of absolute mendicancy, I made my way to England. For three days and nights I wandered about this huge and inhospitable city, unsheltered and unpitied. On the night when I met you, I had *fortunately* been unsuccessful in offering my services to the skippers of every



we must rush out in  
 an to man, and esca  
 opportunity." And ag  
 shouted in that bol  
 hich I had so often  
 tances marked the  
 ower, "FIGHT LIKE M  
 ORWARD!"

Our egress was fier  
 essarily disor

to enter between London  
 and all. The moment I saw you  
 that I knew you; and the  
 of mine, the splendour in  
 and the happy security with  
 very much of your former  
 had a little staggered me,  
 you until all doubt vani  
 and I determined to visit  
 The rest you know  
 you."

you had been mistaken  
 get out of the dis  
 and my doubt  
 way to my dis  
 business. I

the real

with terms more favourable than I had ventured to hope for, and certainly far more moderate than I should have ventured to propose. And with his pocket-book lined with notes to the amount of a thousand pounds my tormentor took his departure, on the understanding that on the day next but one then coming I should be prepared to deliver to him a bond providing for the quarterly payments of an annuity of five hundred pounds.

And now I felt secure of peace as far as he was concerned ; for he had a direct and considerable interest in my safety and prosperity.

On the following day I instructed my solicitor to prepare the bond, leading him to believe that its provisions were in favour of a relative of my wife's. I enjoined the utmost dispatch, and that same evening the instrument was duly delivered to me as I sat at dinner ; and at the conclusion of that meal I retired to my study to peruse it. I was very anxious that there should be no single word inserted or omitted of which the insertion or the omis-

sion could by possibility excite the *suspicion* and by consequence arouse the *rage*, of the malignant ruffian at whose mercy alone I could for the future hold reputation or *even life*; and I was sufficiently acquainted with his character to feel positively certain that he would scrutinize every clause and every word with the keenest and most unslumbering anxiety to guard himself against any chicanery on the part of my attorney.

## CHAP. XXIII.

THE document was perfectly satisfactory and complete, and when I had perused it to the end, I laid it down and leaned back in my chair, surveying it with a pleasure that almost amounted to gratitude. True, it was an extortion, but the extortion was moderate in its amount; and it left me more than necessary wealth, while it made the only person who could injure me interested in my safety, and dependant upon my life for the means of supporting and enjoying his own.

I had now even gained enough of serenity to turn again to my recently neglected studies; and I was just completely absorbed in the

Prometheus of *Æschylus*, that much-talked-of but little understood triumph of a mighty genius, when a furious knocking at my door recalled my senses to things present, and I prepared myself for a summons to some bed of sickness and suffering.

My servant shortly entered and announced, not a messenger demanding my professional aid, but—Maxwell. I desired that he should be shown in ; and he entered accordingly, stern, gloomy, and with a lurid light in his fierce eyes, that sprang partly from intoxication and partly from rage.

For a few moments he sat opposite to me without speaking ; and I was too much surprised at his advent before the appointed time, and at the strange wildness of his manner and appearance, to make any inquiry or even to be guilty of the courteous hypocrisy of bidding him welcome. He was the first to break silence.

“ Well, my hearty host,” said he, “ you

don't seem too well pleased to see me. You'll be still less pleased, I guess, when I tell you I've come for a fit-out of cash."

"Of cash! why you had a thousand pounds last night."

"And that's true enough, too, but to-night I've not a coin to jingle against another. There be sea sharks, my loving host, and there be land sharks, too; and faith, there be gudgeons for both of them to devour. The devil's in the dice, I think; I thought to break the bank, but *nostra senora*! the bank broke me, and here I am as pennyless as a poet, and almost as hungry, too. But you're rich, and you're my good and liberal friend, and my ever-ready banker; so all's well, and let your lubbers bring me some of your exemplary wine and incomparably roasted pullets."

There was a desperate levity in the wretch's manner which spoke more plainly of the malice to which opposition was probable to excite him, and appalled me infinitely more, than any degree of violence or open threatening could

have done. I therefore gave the required orders, and when the supper-tray was again removed, handed him over a couple of hundreds, and the bond for the due payment of his annuity.

Once more he departed; and I again and again congratulated myself upon my probable peace. But my self-gratulation was as brief as my hope was ill-founded. Early on the following day he again presented himself, and again succeeded in extorting a considerable sum from me, which, with the true infatuation of a gamester, he lost, as he had done the previous sums. From that time to the present he has unceasingly persecuted and pestered me; and, were I to transcribe the account I have by me of the items and sum total which he has wrung from me, it would seem to be utterly incredible that he could have squandered so vast an amount in so comparatively brief a space of time. My wealth, wisely stored as it had been, and continually as it was increased by my immense receipts, was sensibly and rapidly diminished. Still he persisted in his ex-

tortions and in his squandering; regularly promising that each new demand should be the last, and breaking his promises just as frequently as he made them.

My malady, long on the increase, was greatly aggravated by the harrassing my mind underwent from the contemplation of the frightful havoc made upon my fortune, and the speedy and utter ruin which would infallibly follow my first refusal to comply with his demands, and administer to his extravagance.

My days became more and more painful, my nights more and more haunted by thick-coming fancies of temporal and eternal misery; and rarely did powerful opiates procure me the sleep from which I did not start in a horror so tremendous, as almost to cause the death I contemplated with shuddering and in awe.

Already the medical man who attended me had pronounced my state to be extremely dangerous and critical—an opinion which my own feelings but too strongly and convincingly seconded,—when a letter arrived, informing me



that my beloved child, my sole blessing,—he whose virtues I had fondly hoped would, in some sort, atone *to the world* for my crimes, and whose genius had already given promise of infinitely surpassing that which I had misapplied to evil,—was at the very point of death.

I hastily threw myself on horseback, and never drew bridle until I reached the sweet cottage in which my suffering boy resided with his mother.

\* \* \* \*

I *cannot* describe his death: guilt, shame, all but that I can review with comparative calmness, but *that* I dare not reflect upon, lest madness should, after all, be my fearful doom. Let it suffice to say that, in twelve hours after my arrival, he died, blessing me with his last breath, and wringing my hand in the fierce agony of his parting pang.

\* \* \* \*

I was now utterly alone in the world; and my fate, long deepening, had now so entirely overwhelmed me, that even death itself had no longer the terrors which I had looked upon and shuddered at so long. My brain seemed literally to be on fire; and I stepped into the garden to bathe my brows in the cool air of the fast-darkening evening. As I entered the garden from the French windows of the parlour, from which my poor boy had just been borne breathless and stiffening, the thick-planted shrubs rustled violently, as if from the motion of some one rapidly seeking shelter among them. Excited as my mind was, I started at the sudden and unexpected sound; and, turning hastily round, perceived a pair of bright and dark eyes glaring at me from amidst the foliage; and, before I could demand the intruder's business in such a place, and at such an hour, Maxwell stepped forward, and confronted me.

"I know it all," said he, "and I am sorry for you; but I am rather prone to keeping

number one in a good state of repair. You understand me? Your horse is fleet, and the coast not distant; and, though I really did not mean to intrude myself upon the grief which I sincerely believe you feel, I was resolved to keep close watch upon your movements. I shall do so still; and if you attempt to overreach me, the odds are very much in favour of your life and my annuity terminating sooner than will be pleasant to either of us."

Before I could reply to him, he vaulted over the low wall of the garden, and for that night I saw him no more.

On the day of my poor boy's funeral, my tormentor was constantly near me; and, in the delirium of my grief, I with great difficulty restrained myself from seizing the villain by the throat, and defying him to the utmost exertion of his malice.

But guilt, remorse, and long-enduring illness had weakened me so far, that my rage was as impotent and transient as the act I briefly meditated would have been destructive;

and when, after my return to my wife's cottage, the torturing and suspicious fiend proposed to be my chaise-companion—for I was now too weak for equitation—to town, I quailed before the sneering devil of his eye; and had not power to refuse, although I both dreaded and loathed the companionship he proffered.

Far from becoming less intrusive and extortionate, as my stricken and utterly wretched state would have made any one but himself, the death of my beautiful and noble boy actually served the wretch before whom I trembled as a new argument for my compliance with his incessant and unreasonable demands. I could not live long, the wretch would tell me; and I had no longer a child for whom I could desire to heap up wealth, and provide corresponding education! And I quailed, submitted, and sobbed in anguish; while I vainly implored forbearance.

\* \* \* \*

Weaker and weaker—nearer and more near to my last hour, I am still persecuted—still harrassed with threatenings, and with the most unconscionable demands. He now wishes me to make him my heir—to strip myself of the power to provide even a decent pittance for my helpless and weak-hearted wife. Though I do not love her, and cannot even respect her, I have not so utterly lost all sense of justice as to leave her destitute. I have refused; my very weakness emboldened me to do so, for I am now too near death by nature to fear it from the avenging and ensanguined hand of the law. But he has promised me only till to-morrow to consider of his demand; and then abuse is certain, and exposure and infamy are probable. Mercy! mercy! I am very weak and very miserable! I have scarcely strength to guide my pen, or to see what it has noted down!

And he who alone, of all whom I have known, has visited me in my solitude, and

soothed me in my sorrow—even he has not yet arrived, though it is long past the hour at which he promised to return !

I am very—*very* wretch—— \* \*

\* \* \* \*

## CHAP. XXIV.

## POSTSCRIPT BY THE EDITOR.

It was perfectly true that I had lacked somewhat of my usual punctuality in calling upon my unfortunate and suffering friend, Douglas D'Arcy ; nevertheless, he erred in supposing, as some of the latter portion of his papers clearly shows that he did, that I had become weary of the task of soothing him, who had none other to raise his languid head, or speak hope and comfort to his stricken heart. The plain truth is my *forte*: of invention I have no notion ; and if I am in any one respect fitted for the editorial task which, for the first time in my life—may it be the last ! for the

operation of performing prefaces and postscripts is but little to my taste—I have undertaken, I am so on account of my rigid adherence to the actual words of my author in what I have retained, and of my care to erase only such passages as struck me to be but little calculated to improve the heart of their reader. Being thus determined an adherent to truth, it would ill become me to depart from it in any one instance; otherwise I should be sorely tempted, just at present, to manufacture the whitest possible fib; for the thing is *so* ridiculous! I must account for my non-attendance on my poor friend. To be involved in an affair of honour, whether as principal or second, would be striking and romantic; but it would not be true. The truth, therefore, must out: I was kept at home by—GOUT! “Pity ’tis ’tis true;” and confessing to such an old-gentlemanly abomination is nearly as bad as enduring it.

“There is an end to all things;” even a fit of the gout will terminate, though it is



consumedly deliberate in its progress to that consummation devoutly to be wished. My first fit of podagra—pray Heaven it may not go to a second edition!—lasted but a few days; and the moment that I was sufficiently recovered to bear the motion of a carriage, I hastened to see my friend. His frame had become so dreadfully debilitated, and his nerves were so completely shattered, that of late he had been unable to reside in town; the mere noise of passing vehicles agitating him to the most alarming degree. He had consequently removed to a very small and secluded cottage on the border of Epping Forest; and thither it was that I proceeded to visit him, when I was sufficiently recovered to do so.

He was dreadfully changed! The small room in which he sat was entirely furnished in black;—black cloth covered the walls, chairs, table, and couch; and the ghastly and polished whiteness of a *memento mori*, which stood upon the table, was in strong and painful contrast to the sombre

nigritude by which it was surrounded. It was evening when I arrived; and the dismal apartment was lighted only by the faint gleaming of a solitary lamp, that

——— "shed a faint and sickly ray around,

As weary of its toil;"—

and, between the mournful appearance of the apartment and the terrible ghastliness of D'Arcy, my spirits were so completely damped, that, for some minutes after my arrival, I was unable to utter a single word.

The worn and melancholy grace of which all his former sufferings had, when I parted from him in town, not wholly deprived him, was now exchanged for such an aspect as I can only describe by saying, that it seemed compounded of sin, sorrow, and agony;—the fierceness of an indomitable mind, struggling against the languor of an emaciated frame, glared in his large eyes, and curled his haughty lip with the terrible beauty which Milton would give to Satan in his thought, and Martin upon the life-like canvass.

The silence was first broken by D'Arcy, who stretched out his small, emaciated, and pallid hand to me, and exclaimed, "I am not, then, wholly deserted; and you have at length returned to close my eyes!"

I endeavoured to feign the cheerfulness I could not feel, and to impart to his mind—not, indeed, a carelessness or forgetfulness of the fate to which he was obviously fast tending, but a hope and a resignation which I saw he was far from feeling. I had just begun to flatter myself that my endeavours were not wholly without their desired effect when heavy footsteps boomed along the narrow passage of the cottage; the door of the apartment in which we sat was violently and uncereimoniously thrown open, and a person entered to whom the reader needs but a brief introduction;—it was Adam Maxwell.

I have seen most of the eminent villains of my time and country; but so picturesque and imposing-looking a ruffian as now stood before me I never saw, either before or since. Sin-

gularly powerful in build, he was no less graceful and symmetrical ; and his *tournure du costume* was admirably adapted to give him that air of "part corsair, part Werter," which, whether rightly or wrongly, we usually look for in a scoundrel of good education and perverted natural powers.

He was obviously much surprised at seeing me seated beside the couch of D'Arcy ; and he involuntarily thrust his hand within the bosom of his expensively furred surtout. The action, brief and half suppressed as it was, revealed to even my rather slow observation that he was "armed to the teeth ;" and I cannot say that the apparition of two brace of short holsters, and the carved ivory handle of what was undoubtedly not a penknife, gave me any relief from the flutter into which I had been thrown by the sudden advent of their redoubtable proprietor.

"So!"—said that worthy, after having narrowly and keenly studied our countenances

for a few minutes—"You have a new friend here; and, faith, you seem to need one! The same consumption is an awkward customer enough: but what's the use of leaving your affairs unsettled, and going sulkily out of the world without enabling your old and right loving friend to stay in it with comfort? Come, man, be reasonable; you must die, but I would fain live, and your will alone is wanting to my doing so in capital style. How say you? am I to be your heir?"

"Never!" exclaimed D'Arcy, with a fierceness which, from his miserable state, I should have thought impossible. "Never! Fiend in human form! I can defy you now—I *do* defy you!"

"Humph!" said the other, "will

"—even song and morwé song agree?"

Eh? There's a bit of your favourite Chancer for you. But, see you!"—and his eyes shot forth a lurid and absolutely fiendish glare as

he spoke—"see you! I will be trifled with no farther. Will you secure me from future want, or will you not?"

"By the agony I am enduring, by the grave to which I am wending, by the gloating worm, and by the dread blast of the awakening trumpet—by Hell itself I will not!"

And, exhausted by the fierce passion with which he spoke, the unhappy man sank powerless and death-like upon his couch.

If looks could have slain, the glance of Maxwell would have deprived D'Arcy of the brief breathing-time allotted to him by his nature. I apprehended, as he rose and approached the couch, that he was even about to be guilty of some personal violence, and I, too, rose, resolved to prevent that, at whatever risk or at whatever personal cost. Apparently, the ruffian read my thoughts in my countenance; for he waved his hand as in scorn, and said—"It were a small matter to put you *hors de combat*: but you need fear nothing. Your friend there is safe as far as my hand is con-

cerned: 'twere ill cheating the woodie! In two hours he shall be dragged to the felon's fitting home; and he shall scream in vain for mercy. He shall die upon the gallows, ignominiously and unpitied!"

So saying, he stalked out of the room, with as self-satisfied a swagger as though he had just performed some signal act of virtuous heroism.

During the first hour after his departure, D'Arcy lay almost entirely silent; a stifled moan or a half-uttered sentence alone announcing from time to time that he still breathed. When the clock of the neighbouring village at length told the expiration of that hour, he became restless, and the strong working of his features showed that he was violently convulsed. Shocked beyond measure, I dispatched the servant for the nearest medical man, and the three of us then knelt beside his couch, bathed his burning brows, and chafed his already rigid limbs. It was probably the effect of our doing so, that he

spoke again: though he was now beyond the power of thinking coherently or even of seeing who were in attendance upon him.

“ You love them?” he said. “ Oh! always love your flowers, whose odorous breathings bless man and purify man’s earth. Love your flowers, dearest boy, and hold sweet converse with them; pry into their lovely nature, tend them—they will never grieve you—till they die. Dearest William, love me, for I am very wretched; the world——Hark, Arthur! they are upon us,—Shoulder to shoulder, men, strike coolly and strike home! Ha, ha! not wealth, not rank, shall save you now. Mercy! Did you prate of it in the senate? Was it your day-dream in your luxurious and undeserved mansion? Down! I starved while you feasted, I was an outcast while you were fawned upon and flattered, and set upon a golden pedestal and worshipped as a God—ay! but the feet of the idol were of clay! Hurra! Down with them! And this base



rabble deems that I wade through hot blood for its sake! The many-headed idiot!—faugh! that gush was boiling—blood, blood! Have mercy, God! I am a murderer!”

How the worst parts of D'Arcy's life had been spent I did not as yet know; and but for the parting declaration of his fierce and savage tormentor, I should have set this rhapsody down for the mere raving of a disordered intellect. But though he obviously was light-headed, I feared what I have since found to be the case, that though he raved, he raved of what was at least in part true. He was now too far gone to speak so as to be audible: but the incessant workings of his throat and lips showed that he was still raving *in mente*. The clock now struck again; and as the sound smote his ear, he raised himself half up and gazed wildly around, shrieked, fell backwards, shuddered—and his danger and his sufferings were at an end.

He was scarcely dead when a violent knock-

ing was heard at the door, and the servant informed me that two men demanded to see his master. I went out to them and inquired their business, assuring them at the same time that he whom they sought was beyond the reach of man. They looked incredulous, and, after whispering for a few moments, insisted upon being allowed to see him;—hinting at the same time that their business was sufficiently important to warrant them in exerting force. I consequently showed them into the room where the body lay. A single glance sufficed to convince them how the case stood. They departed, and as they did so, I heard them vowing vengeance against the fellow who had played them what they termed and thought “such a rascally trick.”

The truth seems to be that the villain Maxwell had been as good as his word, and given information to the police officers of the murder in which D'Arcy had been concerned. This seems the more likely as I have never

been able to discover him, though my inquiries have been diligent and frequent. Being foiled in his design upon D'Arcy's purse, he most probably made his way to sea, and resumed his former business of Buccaneering.

THE END.

.

.

